

DAVID ZEISBERGER AND THE MORAVIAN INDIAN MISSION
IN THE OLD NORTHWEST, 1782-1808

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Abstract

This thesis examines the mission activity of David Zeisberger from the massacre of 96 Christian Indians at Gnadenhütten in 1782 to Zeisberger's death in 1808. The research is restricted to settlements in the "Old Northwest," specifically New Gnadenhütten (outside Detroit), New Salem, Goshen, and other locations in the Upper Ohio Valley. One of the most significant missionaries to the Native Americans, Zeisberger was influential in the development of what historian Jane T. Merritt has called "a distinctive native Christian religion." The present study examines Zeisberger's role in the religious and social life of the Moravian Indian congregations after the Gnadenhütten massacre, including his translation of scriptural and liturgical works into the Delaware language. While other studies have looked at Zeisberger's mission before 1782, have focused on other regions, or have studied the missions primarily from the standpoint of Indian culture, the present study places Zeisberger's mission in the broader context of Moravian and Indian worlds as they intersected in the Old Northwest at the turn of the eighteenth century. An examination of the detailed mission diaries Zeisberger and his co-missionaries kept reveals that many Indians continued to interact with the Moravian theology of the suffering Saviour in meaningful ways even after the Gnadenhütten massacre. After 1782, Zeisberger took the lead in reviving and maintaining the unique Moravian religious culture that had characterized the earlier mission towns. Indians continued to find this culture centered on a theology of the suffering Saviour a compelling reason to join the *Gemeine* (community), often in the context of famine, alcoholism, and displacement among native communities. Native resistance movements, a response to Euro-American expansion after the Revolutionary War, and Moravian cooperation with the Indian civilizing program of the United States contributed to the decline of the Moravian mission towns toward the end of Zeisberger's life. These factors exerted greater influence than the Gnadenhütten massacre on the decline of the missions, as Zeisberger found it impossible to maintain the "permeable boundaries" inherent in the mission towns.

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Vita

Kyle Fisher was born and raised in northeastern Maryland. He graduated from Virginia Tech in 2010 with a B.A. in Communication and a major in History. He taught humanities at a small Christian school while completing a M.A. in Teaching at Loyola University Maryland. He continued to work part-time as a tutor after beginning online courses at Gordon-Conwell in 2013. Shortly after defending this thesis, Kyle plans to return to Maryland and work full-time while remaining involved in his home church. He will pursue doctoral studies as God leads and clarifies his calling.

I owe special thanks to multiple people who have helped me get this far. First to my parents for the many ways they've supported my learning over the years. I also thank my grandfather, the late Rev. Dr. Milton Fisher, for first suggesting that I should consider attending seminary. This thesis would not have been possible without the mentoring of Dr. Garth Rosell, with whom I had the privilege of taking the last four classes he taught before his retirement after fifty years in the classroom. His suggestion to incorporate more theology into this project greatly enhanced my study of Moravian missions. I'd also like to thank Dr. Gordon Isaac for his consistent encouragement and attentiveness during our meetings. He helped me tweak my argument and, as far as I can tell, relished the opportunity to discuss even the smallest historical details. Dr. Gwenfair Adams graciously agreed to read the thesis and offered incisive feedback and thoughtful questions. I want to thank Linford Fisher for telling me about the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, as well as Tom McCullough at the Moravian Archives for going the extra mile to suggest possible sources and dig up items in English. Trevor and Suzy, thanks again for your hospitality in offering me a place to stay and pleasant dinnertime conversation during my research trips. Finally, I'd like to thank the many friends who have taken an interest in this project, whether history types or not. The question, "How's the thesis going?" has meant more to me than you think.

A note on terminology: In keeping with scholarly precedent, I use the terms Moravian, Brüdergemeine, Unity of the Brethren, and Unity interchangeably.

Chapter One: Beyond Gnadenhütten

The years 1781 and 1782 proved the most harrowing in David Zeisberger's long missionary career. A party of Indian warriors had come to the Moravian Indian town of Gnadenhütten with orders to remove the Christian Indians and take the missionaries captive. In 1779, Zeisberger had provided intelligence to American forces, compromising the long-suspected neutrality of the Moravians in the American Revolution. A growing nativism among tribes in the Great Lakes region convinced warriors such as these that the Moravian Indian towns in the Ohio Valley should be destroyed. When weeks of negotiating failed, some Wyandot warriors seized the missionaries, stripped them of most of their clothes, and ransacked their homes. They were placed in canoes and sent to Detroit to stand trial before the British. Acquitted, Zeisberger and his fellow missionaries were eventually free to return to their Indian congregation, but were soon commanded to meet an Indian-British delegation south of Lake Erie, detaining them again.

By February 1782, the Christian Indians, impoverished and hungry, had dispersed throughout the Ohio Valley. When the Wyandot leader Half-King allowed them to return to Gnadenhütten to harvest their corn, they encountered some warriors who warned the group of an impending reprisal for their killing of a white family. In the brutal western frontier, where Indians and whites had learned to hate each other, the Moravian Indians quickly became the subject of a rumor that blamed them for this most recent episode of violence. A large group of men from frontier settlements rallied under the command of Lt. Col. David Williamson to enact revenge. Approaching Gnadenhütten, they feigned peace and even appeared interested in the Indians' attempts to speak with them about the Moravian Saviour. Despite their protests of innocence, the militia told them they would

all be executed. Locked up in houses overnight, the Indians sang Moravian hymns and prayed. In the morning they were dragged in pairs to designated “slaughter houses,” where they were systematically butchered with hatchets, clubs, and knives. Two boys, one of them scalped, managed to escape and inform the missionaries of the tragedy. Ninety-six Indians, ninety of them from the Moravian congregations, were murdered. When Zeisberger, who was detained this entire time, was released he sent word to Indians in the congregation still in Ohio to come to him on the Huron River outside Detroit. To his great disappointment, he found that they were “... much scattered in the bush, here and there.”¹ Just as worrisome to Zeisberger was the vulnerable state of the Christian Indians who might be persuaded to return to their pre-Christian ways. The Gnadenhütten massacre is one of the most infamous examples of Euro-American violence against Native Americans.² While egregious, it is only one example of the increased racialized violence among Indians and whites following the Seven Years’ War.³ Such was the context for David Zeisberger’s missionary endeavors in the newly formed American Republic. (See Appendix for map).

Some scholars have argued that the 1782 Gnadenhütten massacre was the beginning of the end of Moravian missions in North America. Not only did this event reduce the population of the Moravian Indian congregation, but it confirmed growing

¹ Eugene F. Bliss, ed. and trans., *Diary of David Zeisberger, A Moravian Missionary among the Indians of Ohio*, 2 vols., (Cincinnati: Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1885), 1:138.

² John P. Bowes, “The Gnadenhütten Effect: Moravian Converts and the Search for Safety in the Canadian Borderlands,” *Michigan Historical Review* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 101.

³ Edmund De Schweinitz, *The Life and Times of David Zeisberger* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1871): 486-557. On the influence of the Seven Years’ War and American Revolution on racialized violence, see Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

fears among Native communities that the Moravians were allied with American Patriots intent on pushing them farther west by whatever means necessary. Amy C. Schutt summarizes a common interpretation of the effect of the Gnadenhütten massacre on Moravian missions when she writes that

Although the Moravian mission among the Delawares struggled along for years afterward, the missionaries never regained prewar levels of success. For many Indians the Gnadenhutten massacre revealed what they had always suspected and feared, that Christianization led to oppression and death. Gnadenhutten was a potent symbol that devastated mission work for decades.⁴

Indian communities negotiated their relationship to Christianity in diverse ways over decades of interaction with white missionaries, including Moravian missionaries. The Gnadenhütten massacre was a disruptive event in the lives of Moravian Christian Indians and the white missionaries who lived with them. It is reasonable to assume that as tragic as Gnadenhütten was, native negotiation with Christianity and white missionaries continued in diverse ways after 1782. Indeed, the Moravian mission diaries reflect such a complex negotiation (or re-negotiation) of the relationship between the Indians and the mission towns. The intermingling of Indian and Euro-American cultures in the Great Lakes region at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, including the influence of Christian teachings on nativist reaction against white Christians, prompts such questions as, How did the Indians themselves understand the Gnadenhütten massacre? How did they interact with the missionaries after 1782? What

⁴ Amy C. Schutt, "Forging Identities: Native Americans and Moravian Missionaries in Pennsylvania and Ohio, 1765-1782" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1995), 11, ProQuest (9531532). See also *ibid*; John R. Weinlick, "Moravianism in the American Colonies," in *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, ed. F. Ernest Stoeffler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 152-56; De Schweinitz, *David Zeisberger*, 553. De Schweinitz stated that the massacre was the "beginning of the decline of the mission."

were their reasons for joining or leaving the mission towns after this time? Indeed, the post-Gnadenhütten missions faced many challenges from violence among Indian and American parties, the threat of alcohol, and calls from Native leaders to separate from Christian missionaries and rejoin Native communities. The diaries show the missionaries were aware that some of the Indians were concerned about returning to Ohio country in 1798 because of the violence they and/or their relatives had experienced there.⁵ But they also reveal a larger picture of the mission towns than is often recognized. While the Moravian Indian congregations under Zeisberger's oversight never reached pre-Gnadenhütten numbers again,⁶ their religious life was characterized by many of the same Indian responses to Christianity as before, including regular practice of rituals centered around devotion to the suffering Saviour of the Moravians. Socially and economically the Indians in the mission towns continued traditions of hunting, building, and growing in use before 1782. David Zeisberger continued to implement the same religious, social, and economic practices in the mission towns as previously.

Other studies have focused on earlier Moravian mission efforts in the Northeast, or on Zeisberger's activities up to the Gnadenhütten massacre in 1782.⁷ However, there needs to be deeper investigation of Zeisberger's role in the religious and social life of the Moravian Indian congregations in the United States after the massacre. Zeisberger's

⁵ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:326-29; Goshen Diary, 11 July 1799, MS., Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., (hereafter MAB).

⁶ Maia Turner Conrad, "'Struck in Their Hearts': David Zeisberger's Moravian Mission to the Delaware Indians in Ohio, 1767-1808" (PhD diss., The College of William and Mary, 1998), 218-226, ProQuest (9920297). Conrad provides the most detailed demographic analysis of the mission congregations with which Zeisberger worked from 1770 to his death in 1808. She draws her data from the mission diaries, which include the numbers of baptized and communicant residents for each year of all mission towns. The largest population was in 1775 (414 Indians), while the smallest was in 1782 (53). The average population from 1787-1797 was 164. The numbers of baptized : unbaptized and baptized : communicant inhabitants roughly follow the same proportions after 1782 as before, showing consistent standards for acceptance into the congregations.

⁷ See, for example, Rachel M. Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Schutt, "Forging Identities."

missionary activity also needs to be placed better in the context of Moravian theology of missions and in changes to the missionary program after the American Revolution. This thesis develops a three-part argument. First, after 1782, Zeisberger took the lead in reviving and maintaining the unique Moravian religious culture that had characterized the earlier mission towns. Indians continued to find this culture centered on a theology of the suffering Saviour a compelling reason to join the *Gemeine* (community), often in the context of famine, alcoholism, and displacement among native communities. Second, Native resistance movements, a response to Euro-American expansionism after the Revolution, exerted greater influence than the Gnadenhütten massacre on the decline of the missions at the end of Zeisberger's life, as the differences between the Goshen and White River missions reveal. Proximity to centers of nativism made it extremely difficult for missionaries like Zeisberger to expand the Indian mission without compromising the "permeable boundaries" inherent in the mission towns. Third, the development of a bureaucratic mission structure within the Moravian Church further weakened the relationship between the mission towns, led by Zeisberger, and their best source of support, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The activities of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen helped subsume Moravian missionary work under the United States' program of civilizing the Indians. This phenomenon contributed to a loss of distinctiveness from other Protestant missionary endeavors and hampered efforts to attract Indians to the congregations.

The major sources for this study are Zeisberger's mission diaries. These present information about the daily social, political and religious life of the Indian congregations and groups or individuals with whom they interacted. The post-1779 diaries focus

especially on the religious life of the congregations and are thus especially salient for this study. In 1741, Zinzendorf asked all Moravian missionary congregations to keep diaries, chiefly to chronicle their religious development. Head missionaries were responsible for writing these and ensuring they were delivered to the Unity Elder's Conference in Germany. Missionaries among the Native Americans usually sent their diaries first to Bethlehem. Here they were copied, archived, and edited before they were sent across the Atlantic. The diaries served a vital role in the international network of the *Brüdergemeine*, and, later in giving the London-based Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen material for their publication known as the *Periodical Accounts*. All Moravian congregations, including mission congregations, regularly received and read together reports from mission congregations around the world. This fostered a sense of shared mission and closeness of the *Brüdergemeine* despite thousands of miles of separation. Yet leaders of missionary activities in London, Germany, or Bethlehem, wanted to present the successes of the mission congregations, and therefore edited the diaries to exclude various problems or controversial statements the missionaries made. For instance, after reading Zeisberger's diaries for early 1779, Bethlehem leader John Ettwein told him to limit his discussion of political events in the Ohio Valley. The missionaries wrote all diaries in German as another way to keep communication only among themselves. As head missionary of the Ohio congregations, Zeisberger had official responsibility for the diaries. The diaries were often sent along with letters to Pittsburgh, then to Lancaster or Lititz, and finally to leaders in Bethlehem. Messengers included Indian "Helpers," fellow missionaries, or more frequently, traders travelling to eastern cities with goods. Messengers often returned to the mission

congregations with supplies from Bethlehem, including paper and ink necessary to write the letters and diaries, as well as letters addressed to the head missionary and the *Gemeinnachrichten* and *Geschichten*, publications from Unity Elder's Conference giving official decisions, news, and worship texts that were necessary to maintain order in the Brüdergemeine. Missionaries were asked to provide a regular record of events relating to their congregations; however, lack of time often required they write quick notes that they could later expand into fuller entries. It is possible that other missionaries assisted Zeisberger with taking initial notes that he later edited from memory. At the end of his life, when Zeisberger was increasingly infirm, his colleague Benjamin Mortimer wrote most of the entries, sometimes from Zeisberger's notes.⁸

Without a command of the eighteenth-century German script in which many of the extant sources are written, I rely on those translated into English. This study will draw on the 1885 Eugene Bliss translation of Zeisberger's diaries that cover the period 1781-1798. These diaries are exceptional in that they are an English translation of Zeisberger's "personal diary," not the "official" one he edited and sent to Bethlehem.⁹ They are therefore perhaps a more authentic rendering of Zeisberger's own sense of the missions than what he sent to his superiors. For the period 1798 to 1807, I rely on official manuscript diaries in English written by Zeisberger and his co-missionary Benjamin Mortimer.

⁸ Hermann Wellenreuther and Carola Wessel, eds., *The Moravian Mission Diaries of David Zeisberger, 1772-1781*, trans. Julie Tomberlin Weber (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 74-83; Carola Wessel, "Connecting Congregations: The Net of Communication among the Moravians as Exemplified by the Interaction between Pennsylvania, the Upper Ohio Valley, and Germany (1772-1774)," in *The Distinctiveness of Moravian Culture: Essays and Documents in Honor of Vernon Nelson on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Craig D. Atwood and Peter Vogt (Nazareth, Pa.: Moravian Historical Society, 2003), 153-172.

⁹ Eugene Paul Mueller, "David Zeisberger's Official Diary, Fairfield, 1791-1795," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 19, no. 1 (1963): 34. See Mueller's correction of Bliss's statement that the "official" diaries are merely excerpts of the "personal" ones.

Synopsis of Zeisberger's Life

David Zeisberger is one of the most significant missionaries of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His sixty-two-year career, which began near the end of the Great Awakening, spanned the French and Indian War, American Revolution, and the clash of whites and Indians in the “Old Northwest” before the War of 1812. An evangelist with command of multiple Native languages, he was widely known for his close association with the Delaware Indians and his efforts to keep them neutral in the hostilities of the later half of the eighteenth century. British and American authorities used him as a translator at treaties and conferences. Moravian leaders accepted his judgments without reservation at a conference on missions in 1764. The founder of the Renewed Moravian Church, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, dedicated Zeisberger a lifelong missionary to the Indians in 1751,¹⁰ and Zeisberger spent the rest of his life embodying the Count’s tireless work ethic. Zeisberger was present at the first Moravian attempt to create a mission in Georgia and among the early settlers of the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania missionary community. Here he trained at the first Moravian school for missionaries, directed by Johann Christian Pylaeus. Zeisberger excelled in the study of Indian languages. In addition to his native German, he was fluent in Dutch and English, and the Native languages of Delaware and Mohawk, with working knowledge of Onondaga and Shawnee.¹¹ While a teenager he began learning the Delaware language mostly through contact with the chief Tatamy, who resided near Bethlehem.¹² Zeisberger officially began his missionary career in 1745, when he accompanied the experienced

¹⁰ De Schweinitz, *David Zeisberger*, 181.

¹¹ Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 73.

¹² Earl P. Olmstead, *David Zeisberger: A Life among the Indians* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1997), 27.

missionary Friedrich Post to a Mohawk settlement at Canajoharie. While assisting Zinzendorf's protégé Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg on a diplomatic journey to the Six Nations council, he was adopted into the Turtle Clan and given the Mohawk name "Ganousseracheri," meaning "on the pumpkin."¹³ Of his contemporaries, Zeisberger did the most to create a written language for the Delaware Indians by translating Moravian hymns, devotional works, and scriptural texts from the original German. He also created a dictionary and grammar of the Onandaga language (one of the nations of the Iroquois), comparing it with German. Zeisberger was involved with a total of 20 mission settlements,¹⁴ comprised of primarily Delaware and Mahican Indians. The mission settlement with the largest number of congregants was Schönbrunn, located on the Muskingum (today called the Tuscarawas) River in present eastern Ohio. Fears of the corruption and violence of white settlers as well as the invitation of the Delaware chief Netawatwees led the Indian congregations out of Pennsylvania, where they had originated, and into the Ohio Valley in 1772. After the scattering of the congregation in 1782, Zeisberger established a new mission town called New Gnadenhütten in Ojibwe territory outside Detroit. In 1787, he returned to northern Ohio and helped found New Salem. With the rise of warfare between the forces of the United States and the Indian confederacy, Zeisberger in 1792 moved the congregation to Fairfield, Upper Canada on the northern shore of Lake Erie. In 1796, the Moravian Church, through its economic support arm the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, received a large grant of land in eastern Ohio from the United States Congress. Two years later,

¹³ William M. Beauchamp, ed., *Moravian Journals Relating to Central New York, 1745-1766* (Syracuse, New York: Dehler Press, 1916), 10-11.

¹⁴ Olmstead, *David Zeisberger*, 341-42. This number is derived from Olmstead's list of Moravian missions in North America.

Zeisberger led a group of nine Christian Indian families from Fairfield back to the Muskingum River to form the new town of Goshen. Zeisberger would remain here until his death in 1808.

Chapter Two: Moravian Theology of Mission and Zeisberger's Role in the Mission Towns

Zeisberger's missionary activity, like the entire Moravian missionary enterprise, was highly influenced by the chief architects of Moravian missions, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and Bishop Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg. Zeisberger's career overlapped with both leaders, but did not begin in earnest until after Zinzendorf died in 1760. Trained as a missionary at the time when Zinzendorf's theology had the greatest influence on Bethlehem, he was mostly part of the professionalized missionary program that Spangenberg developed as leader of the Moravian Church following Zinzendorf's death. Spangenberg largely continued Zinzendorf's approach to Christian mission from the distant headquarters in Herrnhut, Germany, but leaders in Bethlehem most immediately affected missions in North America. Although the latter half of Zeisberger's career saw an attenuated relationship from Bethlehem, an understanding of his work entails some background in Moravian theology of missions.¹⁵

Zinzendorf set the agenda for most of Moravian theology of mission. He studied the Danish Halle missions, endeavors of the Anglican Church's Society for Propagating the Gospel, and Hans Egede's mission to Greenland. Egede had failed because he began his preaching by trying to argue first for the existence and nature of God, then work his way to the gospel. In keeping with his highly Christocentric theology, Zinzendorf eventually insisted that Moravian missionaries must first speak of Jesus, the incarnate God who suffered and died to redeem individuals from sin. In an early letter to an English member of the Moravian Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Zinzendorf presented three

¹⁵ Katherine Carté Engel, *Religion and Profit: Moravians in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 91-2, 195, 235-36.

rules for missionaries that he later developed in more detail. First, a missionary must live humbly before the “heathen.” Missionaries must find their own employment to support themselves since they would not receive a salary. Not only would this require the missionary to depend on God, but it would make him industrious. For Zinzendorf, setting an example of hard, diligent labor would attract the heathen to the gospel message.¹⁶ Likewise, missionaries must show spiritual humility in their leadership of new congregations. The missionary should not ‘rule over the heathen in the slightest but ... [be] in a respected position among them with spiritual power,’ he later wrote.¹⁷ Second, the missionary should first preach Christ; all other doctrines were secondary. The missionary could talk about the doctrines of creation and the fall, for example, but only after Christ had been preached. This meant that catechesis, so frequently used among missionaries, had no basis for Zinzendorf. “... I can never wonder enough,” he said, “At the blindness and ignorance of those people who ... think that if they have ... [the heathen] memorize the catechism or get a book of sermons into their heads, or ... present all sorts of well-reasoned demonstrations, ... that this is the sovereign means to their conversion.”¹⁸ Lastly, the missionary should aim to make individual conversions, not national ones. This was not only consistent with the individualistic bent of the Count’s theology, but it also prevented the missionary from getting entangled with politics or violating the civil law. Although zealous for spreading the gospel, Zinzendorf was cautious in selecting missionaries. Candidates had to be unreservedly committed: ‘A

¹⁶ Ibid., 48-9.

¹⁷ Zinzendorf, “Letter to a Missionary of the English Society,” in E. Beyreuther and G. Meyer, eds., *Ergänzungsbände Zu Den Hauptschriften, Vol IX* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966), 812, quoted in David Allen Schattschneider, “‘Souls for the Lamb’: A Theology for the Christian Mission According to Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and Bishop Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1975), 99, ProQuest (T-25839).

¹⁸ Nicholas Ludwig Count von Zinzendorf, *Nine Public Lectures On Important Subjects In Religion*, trans. and ed. George W. Forell (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1973), 35.

missionary seeks nothing else day and night [than] that the heathen find joy in their Savior, and that the Savior find joy in the heathen,' he said. The entire task of the missionary was "to preach the crucified Savior into ... [heathen] hearts and to paint him before their eyes."¹⁹ But the missionary's work was unfruitful unless the Spirit was working also. Most significantly, any conversion occurred because the Holy Spirit had drawn the heart of the individual to Christ, who desired that person to join the *Gemeine* (congregation, church, community).²⁰ Only those in whom the Spirit was working could respond to the preaching of the missionary.²¹

Spangenberg, the Count's most trusted colleague, both changed and applied Zinzendorf's theological insights in the latter half of the eighteenth century.²² Spangenberg was Bishop of the Moravian Church from 1744 to 1762 and leader of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, the economic support arm of Moravian missions, which he resurrected in 1766. In 1762 he became head of the General Executive Board in Herrnhut, Germany, a position he held for thirty years. His application – with some changes – of Zinzendorf's theology of mission to a highly organized administrative structure, had perhaps an even greater effect on missions in North America. Prompted to give a detailed overview of how the Moravians in fact conducted their noticeably successful missions, he penned *An Account of the Manner in Which the Protestant Church of the Unitas Fratrum, or United Brethren, Preach the Gospel and Carry on their Missions Among the Heathen* in 1788. Written essentially as

¹⁹ Gary S. Kinkel, ed. *Christian Life and Witness: Count Zinzendorf's 1738 Berlin Speeches* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), 40.

²⁰ Craig D. Atwood, *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press), 2004, 60-3.

²¹ John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 99-101; quotation, 229.

²² Schattschneider, "'Souls for the Lamb,'" 183-84.

an apologetic to an inquisitive Anglo evangelical audience, the *Account* explained through biblical examples how the Brethren justified their missionary work. Especially important for Spangenberg was the Apostle Paul, the model missionary.²³ 1 Corinthians says that Paul did not preach the gospel with persuasive words of human wisdom. Paul therefore believed that one does not come to faith through logical proof, but through the experience of the gospel in one's own heart. Echoing Zinzendorf's Christocentric theology, Spangenberg proclaimed that, "... [T]he blood and death of Jesus must remain our diamond in the golden ring of the gospel."²⁴ While Spangenberg in particular emphasized the activity of the missionary more than that of the Spirit in conversion, he also described the somewhat passive approach to evangelization that distinguished Moravian mission endeavors from those of other Christians. The Brethren initially enter an area, he explained, and prove themselves as "good, and outwardly useful people," in contrast to the often poor reputation the uncovered have of Christians from encounters with merchants and traders. Missionaries sometimes give the heathen "according to Christian love, various little services," while avoiding the attempt to convert "by dint of presents." This "time of waiting serves meanwhile this good purpose, that the brethren may watch in silence, (which is very necessary) to see whether there be here or there a person, whom God himself is preparing, by his grace, to hear and receive a word concerning Jesus Christ, and of our salvation in him." There were classes of heathen recognized in each mission congregation that paralleled the classes in settlements like Bethlehem. The unbaptized merely attended general congregational meetings. Candidates

²³ Ibid., 180-83.

²⁴ August Gottlieb Spangenberg, *An Account of the Manner in which the Protestant Church of the Unitas Fratrum, or United Brethren, Preach the Gospel and Carry on their Missions among the Heathen* (London: H. Trapp, 1788), 65, MAB.

for baptism were those who had received instruction, while the baptized were confirmed after a period of observation that they were indeed recipients of God's grace. Sometimes the baptized lapsed into sin and experienced a time of discipline through admonishment or expulsion, usually with the ability to return if contrite. Candidates for communion were another class, namely, those who had received instruction in the purpose and gravity of the sacrament. Candidates were admitted to participate in a communion before they gained the status of "communicant."²⁵ Spangenberg emphasized close instruction of the unconverted. The missionary should observe anyone who had recently heard the gospel. If an individual showed an interest in receiving the Saviour, that person must be baptized soon after an interview with a missionary confirmed that interest. Additionally, the weekly Lord's Supper was given only to those whose hearts were in right relation with the Saviour. Missionaries should interview each communicant before he or she received communion, asking if there was any reason why the candidate should not partake that week and postponing participation if necessary. Native Helpers could be useful in questioning candidates for baptism and communion and reporting on the state of the souls of members of the congregation, often at "Helpers' Conferences" with missionaries. They also visited the sick, assisted the poor, and occasionally – women excepted – preached a "discourse" or funeral speech.²⁶ Zeisberger's mission activity reflected all of the forementioned components of Spangenberg's mission theology.

The highly organized religious and social life that Zinzendorf and Spangenberg developed at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania was the foundation of the life in the mission towns. The Revolution and tragedy of 1782 disrupted normal communication between

²⁵ Ibid., 75-81.

²⁶ Ibid., 86-8.

missionaries in the Ohio Valley and Bethlehem. In the post-Zinzendorf era of professional missionary labor, Zeisberger's visits to Bethlehem were less important to church leaders. Zeisberger's last appearance at Bethlehem was at a Synod in April, 1781. Extracts from the meetings only record his presence.²⁷ A brief overview of changes in Bethlehem's missionary purpose is necessary to understand how Zeisberger was so vital to the mission towns while having less significance to Bethlehem.

In 1739, the General Synod at Ebersdorff approved Spangenberg's plan for Bethlehem as a settlement with the sole purpose of sending itinerant preachers, operating schools, and supporting missionaries to Native Americans and fellow Germans who had settled in Pennsylvania. This *Pilgergemeinde*'s (pilgrim congregation's) purpose was far less about creating a new settlement for Germans than creating a headquarters for Moravian missionary labor in North America. After the Moravians failed to win over their mostly Lutheran or indifferent German neighbors, Spangenberg redirected Bethlehem's missional focus exclusively toward Natives. With Zinzendorf's assistance, he engineered the famous "General Economy," (or *Oeconomy*) a system of communal labor in which every person in Bethlehem produced enough to sustain themselves while contributing a share of profit to fund all financial costs of the missionary labor. Implemented in 1744, the *Oeconomy* grouped the people of Bethlehem into "choirs," or units according to age, sex, and marital status. The purpose for this was rooted in theological belief and practical consequence for missions. Zinzendorf believed that religious practice should be tailored to the stage of an individual's life. Children

²⁷ "Conferences kept with the Labourers of the City and Country Congregations in Bethlehem [26 Apr – 28 Apr 1781]," MS., supplement to the results of the American Provincial Synod, held in Bethlehem, Pa., MAB.

experienced the Saviour differently than their parents, married people differently than single people. By raising children in separate homes from their parents or restricting single adults to their own choir, each person could cultivate deeper devotion to the Saviour. Each choir had its own religious occasions, including communion celebrations, baptisms, lovefeasts, festivals, and celebrations, with appropriate liturgies and litanies. Secondly, each choir could become a more efficient production unit, where each person could practice a trade appropriate to his or her age and sex. The church owned the land, buildings, and businesses of Bethlehem, and people worked for their own food, clothing, medical care, and shelter. The only wages were the pleasure of seeing fruitful missionary labor. They did, however, retain as private property what they had brought with them or made for themselves, including money, which they deposited in a bank without receiving interest. By the time of Zinzendorf's death in 1760, the Moravian Church was in a financial crisis. Creditors called in loans and the Unity Elders' Conference decided that Bethlehem, the most economically prosperous of the Moravian communities, ought to shoulder a substantial cost. From Herrnhut, the Elders' Conference instructed Spangenberg to dismantle the Oeconomy – including the choir system – by making individual homes for each family and turning all trades into family-operated businesses. The transition to an *Ortsgemeinde* (local church congregation) was complete by 1771, with Bethlehem shouldering eleven percent of the Unity's total debt. Although the church still owned the land and buildings in Bethlehem and exercised economic control through set prices and wages and approval of new businesses, Bethlehem “began to turn inward” – to use Katherine Carté Engel's phrase. The end of the Oeconomy meant missions were now secondary to Bethlehem's purpose. Leaders in distant Europe gave far more attention to

the more successful missions in South America and the Caribbean. The Mission Diacony of the Unity Elders' Conference took official control of Moravian missions, and Spangenberg, now administrator of the Unity, removed most of Bethlehem's authority in the global missions project.²⁸

In terms of practical guidance, however, the Indian mission congregations were forced to depend almost exclusively on Bethlehem. In the diaries, Zeisberger expressed a sense of dependence on Bethlehem. Early in 1783, shortly after regrouping a small number of Indian congregants on the Clinton River outside Detroit, he noted that their situation had improved slightly, but, " ... One thing is wanting – correspondence with our church, particularly with Bethlehem; this we have lost, and we must do without and deny ourselves much." When the Goshen mission was struggling to get underway in 1798, he reminded the Indians, " ... Of the love of the brethren in Bethlehem" and that their material needs "should certainly be relived" with the help of their Pennsylvania brethren.²⁹ Zeisberger knew he needed Bethlehem. To survive, the mission congregations needed to derive a sense of meaning from their connection to the rest of the Unity of the Brethren. Because spreading the gospel was the heart of the mission congregations themselves, they needed to have this sense of connection to Bethlehem, the settlement from which Moravian missions in North America initiated. For the Ohio missions, that particularly meant maintaining communication with Bethlehem, where leaders like Nathaniel Seidel, John Ettwein, and George Henry Loskiel provided guidance and

²⁸ Joseph Mortimer Levering, *A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1741-1892* (Bethlehem: Times Publishing Company, 1903): 55-6; Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 116-20, 174-77, 182; Beverly Prior Smaby, *The Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem from Communal Mission to Family Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 26, 32-6; Jacob John Sessler, *Communal Pietism Among Early American Moravians* (New York: AMS Press, 1971), 85-6; Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 27, 168-71, 91-92; quotation, 171; Wessel, "Connecting Congregations," 155.

²⁹ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:132; Goshen Diary, 28 October, 1798, MS., MAB.

support. Missions after Zeisberger fizzled out in part because Zeisberger was the only professional missionary with the essential connection to the General Economy-era Bethlehem that had trained the early North American Moravian missionaries.

Gillian Gollin has pointed out that it was the strongly shared values and beliefs of the Moravians, particularly their compulsion to show the love of the Saviour to others and their missionary zeal, that both drew them inward and forced them to open themselves to the world.³⁰ Nowhere was this reality more present than in the mission towns. These were, by nature, communities of indigenous Christians led by missionary “labourers” that were meant to expand through incorporating new souls from surrounding non-Christian – or “heathen,” as they often called them – communities. There was always a tension between maintaining religious and social life within the towns and extending that life outward. To ease this tension, the Moravians intentionally created their settlements to have what one might call “permeable boundaries” – to coin a phrase. That is, non-Christian Indians could come in and Christian Indians could go out, but there ought to remain a clear distinction between who was Christian and who was not. Where the Moravians could maintain these “permeable boundaries,” they succeeded. Where they could not, they failed. Rules and rituals helped to define the permeable boundary between the Gemeine and the heathen by cohering those who wanted to follow them and repelling those who did not. Rules were codified in congregation “statutes.” Rituals included baptism, communion, footwashing and observance of special days through celebrations and meals.

³⁰ Gillian Lindt Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 18.

Zeisberger was the person at the center of the effort to maintain the “permeable boundaries” of the Ohio mission settlements, and he often felt a struggle to keep the Indian brethren separate from outsiders while simultaneously inviting outsiders to join. For instance, in May 1787, when he discovered that the Delaware chief Titawachkam was dishonest about how close Zeisberger’s relocating mission congregation would be to non-Christian Indians, the missionary expressed the struggle inherent in maintaining these “permeable boundaries:”

... [W]e saw that great damage could ... spring up for us, yes, that we might be eaten and swallowed by the savages, unless the powerful and extraordinary hand and might of God should rule over us.... We were already well enough aware that we are under the rule of the heathen.... [W]e find it hard that we are not our own masters. On the contrary, considered from the other side, it is quite in accordance with our purpose that we dwell among them, it is indeed our calling to preach them the Gospel, and that cannot be done if we are distant from them.³¹

The “statutes” were essential for maintaining the “permeable boundaries” of the mission settlements. John Ettwein oversaw the development of a set “Statutes and Rules” for Indian mission settlements when he visited Schönbrunn in 1772, and these remained the standard throughout Zeisberger’s tenure. The missionaries read the statutes to every Indian who wanted to live with the congregation. They were read again to baptismal candidates, because anyone committing to baptism – in the eyes of the missionaries – was committing to the Saviour. Anyone not willing to abide by the statutes was refused permission to join the mission. As codes of conduct for the *Gemeine*, the statutes were

³¹ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:344.

similar to the brotherly agreements used in European Moravian congregations,³² and underscored the fact that joining the Gemeine was a serious matter. The Indians who lived with the congregation, whether baptized or not, understood that doing so was leaving certain cultural practices behind and accepting certain new ones. Some changes were more difficult for the Indians to accept than others. For instance, the Indians could not attend “Dances, offerings or heathenish festivals, or sinful plays.” Much of their ceremonial life would be replaced with Moravian rituals and practices. Indians could continue to hunt, but could not use “tshapiient, or witchcraft.” (In practice, this would have been difficult to enforce, since missionaries rarely accompanied the Indian brethren on their hunts). The eighteenth statute was later amended to forbid any Indian living in the towns from going to war or purchasing any item taken during war. This may have been the most difficult statute for some Indians to accept, given the frequent pressure they faced from chiefs and relatives to ally against the Americans, but for those who wanted to escape from war, it may have been appealing.³³ Basically a combination of the first of the Ten Commandments and Moravian Christocentric theology, the first statute required the Indians to “know of no other God and pray to no other but to him who has made us and all creatures and who came into this World to Save us poor Sinners.” The statutes required lifelong monogamy, in contrast to traditional native practice of serial monogamy. Women were expected to “be obedient” to their husbands, “take good care of the Children,” and “be cleanly in all things.” Moravian Indian women worked in every capacity of the mission – as agricultural and economic producers, Helpers, and children’s caretakers. Because the mission towns never fully embraced the choir system – mostly

³² Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 60.

³³ Conrad, ““Struck in their Hearts,”” 177; Bliss, *Diary*, 1:235, 451-53.

because the missionaries recognized the Indians would not tolerate it – women were able to maintain their traditional cultural roles.³⁴ While separate religious services were held for married couples and occasionally single women and men, women lived with their families, in contrast to European Moravians. The main difference between male and female involvement with the missions appears to have been the restriction on female teaching, whether as school instructors, preachers, or translators. The diaries do not record female protest with these arrangements, perhaps because public speaking was considered a male task in Delaware society. In her analysis of Moravian influence on the gender traditions of the tribes present in the missions, Amy C. Schutt concludes that, “Moravian Christianization did not result in an upheaval in gender roles and occupations, despite the new emphasis on lifelong monogamy and the nuclear family.... Indian women, along with men, took an active part in shaping the course of Christianization.”³⁵ Some of the statutes were in fact attractive to the Indians. The stipulation that “We will not admit any rum or strong liquor in our towns” was appealing to Indians whose communities were blighted with alcoholism. When visiting Indians brought two kegs of whiskey to Goshen, they agreed to “the rules” and allowed the Indian brethren to confiscate the alcohol until they left.³⁶ Finally, other statutes required children to obey their parents, restore damaged property, show diligence in building and planting, stay out of debt with traders, and provide food to entertain strangers. The statutes were religious and moral injunctions that drew clear boundaries between Christian and non-Christian Indians. They also touched on most aspects of life in the mission towns. They did not

³⁴ Conrad, ““Struck in their Hearts,”” 98-9.

³⁵ For a fuller description of Moravian influence on Indian gender relations, see Schutt, “Forging Identities,” 43-51; quotation, 51. Cf. Conrad, ““Struck in their Hearts,”” 177, who says traditional Delaware society was monogamous.

³⁶ Goshen Diary, 11 July 1799, MS., MAB.

forbid contact between Christian Indians and non-Christian relatives or neighbors, but they did make it clear that Moravian Christian practices regarding sexuality, family, labor, money, and religious doctrine were the only permissible ones for any who wished to live in the mission towns.³⁷

Congregants could face expulsion from the mission if they violated any of the statutes. Often, Indian Helpers were sent to do this.³⁸ The Mohawk Moses spoke with Zeisberger in the fall of 1799 about his wife Rachel, who had had sex with another man. Moses was so angry with her that “he had had thoughts of murdering her.” The missionaries discovered that Rachel’s brother had also acted “very improperly,” suggesting a case of incest. Joshua, William Henry, and their wives were sent to expel Rachel and her brother from the congregation, explaining that “their unbecoming behavior had long been patiently borne with,” but “the hope of their amendment” was not evident. Despite their protestations of leaving their families, “such permission could unhappily not be granted to them.” Benjamin Mortimer expressed the missionaries’ understanding of the towns well when he commented on this incident: the Indian congregation is “intended to be an asylum for those who seek their salvation, & an infirmary for the spiritually sick. Those only are dismissed as incurables who despise their heavenly physician, and absolutely refuse to be obedient to his merciful prescriptions.” For Mortimer, as for Zeisberger, rejection of the statutes was rejection of the Saviour, and could not be tolerated.³⁹

³⁷ “Statutes & Rules Agreed upon by the Christian Indians at Lagundo Utenünk and Welhik Tuppek, August 1772,” in Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, “Appendix, Document No. 3,” 563-64.

³⁸ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:230. Zeisberger observed that the Indian Helpers were typically more effective than the missionaries in resolving disputes among the Indian brethren, especially because they listened better and could speak the truth in a more appropriate way.

³⁹ Goshen Diary, 16-17 October 1799, MS., MAB.

Many times, however, the diaries show that the missionaries willingly accepted former congregants who were expelled for violating the statutes but returned truly contrite. Moses and Rachel eventually reconciled and were allowed to rejoin the mission in January the following year.⁴⁰ Mamasu seems to have experienced a full range of interaction with the congregation. Mamasu had been a strong opponent of the Moravians in the 1770s, and even wanted to attack the settlements. By 1787, however, his situation changed, and he desired to join them. After speaking with his friends, he left his Delaware settlement with the permission of his chief, Captain Pipe. He told Zeisberger at New Salem that he wanted to live with the “Indian brethren” because those at the Delaware town of Coshocton lived an impoverished life where drinking was bringing them to ruin. Since the Delawares “had heard they would be free from this [situation] if they came to us, all would like to be with us,” Zeisberger wrote. Showing typical caution about receiving new members, the missionaries did not “advise him one way or the other,” but only wanted him to be firm in whatever decision he made. When he resolved to stay, the missionaries agreed he could live with them and informed him of the congregation rules. Three months later, after having talked often about Christianity with Zeisberger, he approached the missionary “of his own accord and from the restlessness of his heart, and had an upright, fraternal talk with him.” When Mamasu introduced his brother who had come to the town from hunting with the Christian Indians, Zeisberger told the man “he should first learn about us by seeing and hearing, so that he could well consider [whether to become a believer] and not afterwards repent.” Four months after first meeting Zeisberger, Mamasu was baptized as Jeremy during the Sunday service on May 27. However, in February the missionaries announced to the congregation that

⁴⁰ Ibid., 10-11 January 1800, MS., MAB.

Mamasu had done something bad enough that he was “shut out of the church till he acknowledged his sin and repented from his heart.” But within a week he had endured “great need and anxiety, so that he could neither sleep nor eat,” and returned to be “compassionately received, to his great comfort and confusion.” The next morning he approached Zeisberger and Edwards to express gratitude “for the mercy shown him.” Mamasu’s readmission to the congregation was cause for Zeisberger to celebrate: “It was as if he had come from death to life.” Characteristically, Zeisberger gave ultimate credit to “the Saviour” for Mamasu’s return, writing that “we [missionaries] must stand back, and the Saviour has only to make good our faults.”⁴¹ Mamasu’s story also shows the appeal of the mission settlements as places of refuge from the ravages of alcohol and poverty Indians in the Great Lakes region faced during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. But Zeisberger was increasingly wary of Indians who made quick pledges to commit themselves to Christianity and life in the Moravian Indian towns. When the son of the trusted Helper Abraham came to the mission ill and “allowed himself to hear something of the Saviour,” Zeisberger was skeptical: “Not much dependence... is to be placed upon the conversion of such people, for we have often seen ... that as soon as they are well again they go their way and forget all they have promised.”⁴² The “promising” was agreement to live by the statutes. For the Moravians, living by the statutes was an agreement to live by the rule of the Saviour and his labourers, and missionaries like Zeisberger expected consistent obedience.

Zeisberger and his missionary co-workers viewed themselves as teachers who had authority over all aspects of life in the villages. Yet they also saw themselves as

⁴¹ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:322-23, 339, 346, 393-95.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1:353.

subservient to the “Chief Elder,” Jesus. A synodal conference in London had proclaimed Jesus Christ the Chief Elder of the United Brethren on September 16, 1741. For making difficult decisions, such as which missionaries should return to Bethlehem, when or where to relocate the mission, or even whether a questionable candidate should receive baptism, the missionaries appealed to their Chief Elder through the lot system. After meeting to solidify their options, they would write on pieces of paper “yes,” “no,” “maybe,” and “blank” (take no action), and place these in a container. The drawn slip expressed the will of the Saviour, and they always acted accordingly.⁴³

Although Moravians traditionally saw the lot as part of the “theocracy” of the Brüdergemeine, leaders often used it to legitimize their own decisions as though they were the Saviour’s.⁴⁴ Zeisberger and the other missionaries at times used the lot to make difficult decisions in a way that squared with their own intuition. Through a church-sanctioned mechanism, they actually found a way to avoid what the leaders of the church wanted in light of what seemed most reasonable. The use of the lot to negotiate the move from the Clinton River outside Detroit back into Ohio country demonstrates this. After the governor of Detroit told John Heckewelder that the Moravians should not continue to build their settlement because of instability in the region, the missionaries agreed to relocate in the spring of 1785. Wanting to avoid danger from threats of the Chippewas but not knowing where to go, the missionaries implored the Saviour for help. The lot confirmed that the Saviour wanted them to return to the other side of Lake Erie. The Moravian Church had received a grant of land in Ohio country from the United States

⁴³ Conrad, ““Struck in their Hearts,”” 38; Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 60, 67-8. In 1748, the Moravians applied their decision that Jesus was the “Chief Elder” of the United Brethren to congregations in North America.

⁴⁴ Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds*, 58.

Congress in 1786, and Bethlehem instructed the missionaries to relocate there. However, news of Indian wars in the Ohio and threats against Zeisberger made the missionaries delay. Perhaps a more significant factor was that some of the Indians expressed hesitation about returning to the region where they had suffered violence. Here the missionaries were caught between the will of the local government, the will of the church government, and the will of the Indians. The lots they created expressed hesitation in asking the Saviour's will, but also revealed their belief that they could not simply do what any one party wanted. Each lot used only one question and one blank slip to restrict the number of options. Did they have a question for the Saviour at this time? The lot confirmed, "Yes." Proceeding, they asked him if he wanted them to move from the Clinton River. "Yes." Did he want them to go to the place on the Muskingum River that the brethren in Bethlehem had secured for them? Again, "Yes." Should they take advantage of the unusually warm weather and leave in January or wait until spring? They could leave in the spring of 1787. When the time came, however, more news of violence along the Muskingum made them ask the Saviour "most pressingly and earnestly to advise us according to his own heart" through the lot. The lot revealed that they should move across Lake Erie, but settle between the Pettquotting and Cuyahoga rivers, north of the granted land, until better times prevailed.⁴⁵ Through the lot, Zeisberger attempted to navigate the challenging situations of the mission in a way that balanced his knowledge of the local authority's directive, the Indian brethren's hesitancy to move, and Bethlehem's instruction. Yet one could view Zeisberger's use of the lot in this case mainly as a way of exercising a measure of independence from Bethlehem when he thought Bethlehem was unaware of the complexities of the mission's situation. The

⁴⁵ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:178-79, 206-07, 319-20, 326-30; quotation 328.

American Moravians had questioned the use of the lot at least since 1764, and the distancing of the American congregations from the ones in Europe during the Revolution only made the lot more unpopular.⁴⁶ For Zeisberger, however, the lot was still useful for supporting his leadership over the Indian congregations. It allowed him to make difficult decisions with greater independence from Bethlehem while supporting them as the will of the Saviour.

⁴⁶ Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds*, 60-2.

Chapter Three: Indians and Moravian Christianity after 1782

In 1775, when en route to conduct negotiations with nearby tribes, the American Captain James Wood attended a typical Sunday service at Schönbrunn. Wood depicted a multicultural worship setting where preacher and worshippers understood themselves to play certain parts in a larger worship experience:

[I] went to Church with the Indians at which were present about One hundred and fifty of them, who all Behaved with the Greatest Decency and Decorum the Minister who resides at this Town is a German of the Moravian Sect has Lived with them several Years has Acquired their Language and taught most of them the English and German he prayed in the Delaware Language Preached in the English and sung Psalms in the German in which the Indians Joined and Performed that part of Divine Service in a Manner really Inimitable the Church is a Decent Square Log Building with Plank floars and Benches Ornamented with Several Pieces of German Scripture Paintings has a Small Cupola with a Bell and a very Indifferent Spinnet on which an Indian played.⁴⁷

Woods' observation underscores several significant things about the religious practice in the mission towns. First, he was surprised that these Indians differed from the common Euro-American stereotype of the loud, disorderly savage; in fact, they were "inimitable." It certainly would have been peculiar to most to see Indians sitting in a church singing German hymns. Second, the minister was uncommon for directing a multilingual church service. He may have heard Zeisberger recite the Lord's Prayer in

⁴⁷ Rueben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., *The Revolution on the Upper Ohio, 1775-1777* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1908): 64.

Delaware, which the missionary had revised from Johann Rothe's earlier translation.⁴⁸ Additionally, the service left an impression on Woods' eyes and ears. The building was well designed with a small cupola and benches that were ornamented with "scripture paintings" – pieces often found with paintings of the crucified Saviour in places where communion or lovefeasts were held.⁴⁹ The Indians were also familiar with Moravian music, which they could sing in German and play on European instruments. The diaries show the Indian brethren had a fondness for singing.⁵⁰ Zeisberger and other missionaries translated hymns, scripture, and prayers into native languages and taught the Indians German from these translations. All of these things were – like the statutes – essential for maintaining the "permeable boundaries" of the mission towns. Zeisberger played a very active role in developing the Indians' connection to the Saviour through rituals such as baptism, communion, footwashing, reading, and singing. Familiar rituals of worship centered on the atoning suffering and death of Jesus brought group cohesion and stability to the Moravians in all the communities they settled around the world.⁵¹ As Jane T. Merritt has argued of the Moravian Indian towns in Pennsylvania, "Moravian theology influenced the development of a distinctive native Christian religion."⁵² Zeisberger continued to transmit this theology to Indians in the post-1782 towns, and the Indians, who faced even greater challenges at the close of the eighteenth century, continued to appropriate it to their own needs in unique ways.

⁴⁸ Kenneth Gardiner Hamilton, "John Ettwein and the Moravian Church during the Revolutionary Period," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 12, no. 3-4 (1940): 334.

⁴⁹ Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 162.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Bliss, *Diary*, 1:187, 223; Goshen Diary, 21 July 1799, 6 January 1800, MS., MAB.

⁵¹ Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds*, 20-1.

⁵² Jane T. Merritt, "Dreaming of the Savior's Blood: Moravians and the Indian Great Awakening in Pennsylvania," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (October 1997): 736.

Religious “meetings” were held every day of the week. On weekdays, the missionaries preached from scripture texts in the morning and used the *Gesangbuch* (hymnal) to hold an evening singing hour. Lectures from the Bible were given once or twice a week to familiarize the Indian brethren with the Scripture. Sunday mornings had a sermon for the entire congregation and the afternoons a children’s hour and separate devotions for baptized congregants and the married choir. A congregation meeting was usually held Sunday evenings. The entire congregation participated in a morning and evening service on Sunday. Zeisberger also preached during separate services for each choir at different times of the week.⁵³

Preaching was one of the most important activities for Zeisberger. The diaries often reveal the earnest pietistic exhortations Zeisberger delivered to the congregation. Language about “giving” one’s “heart” to the “Saviour” is common. Zeisberger emphasized the mercy, kindness, compassion, and hope of the Saviour toward the Indian brethren. Especially during troubling times, he urged his listeners to seek the joy that comes with giving oneself completely to the Saviour, who had in fact not forgotten them despite their troubles. In a sermon at Goshen in 1801, he exhorted the Indian brethren to remain faithful to the Saviour that their relatives before them had worshipped, especially because the Saviour had been faithful to bring them together again.⁵⁴ Zeisberger’s preaching was certainly Christocentric, although not the extent of Zinzendorf’s. The theological themes of the incarnation and atonement of Christ were consistent throughout his preaching and teaching. As late as 1803, he and the other missionaries affirmed their commitment to religious instruction that avoided complex exposition of doctrine but

⁵³ Ibid., 165, 166. “Conference Held at Schönbrunn on 19 August 1773,” in Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 559-63.

⁵⁴ Goshen Diary, 6 January 1801, MS., MAB.

appealed to the heart.⁵⁵ Zeisberger preached that believers could take comfort knowing that Christ, who was “clad in our poor flesh and blood ... has reconciled us to God through his sufficient sacrifice.”⁵⁶ At times, Zinzendorf’s famous “Blood and Wounds” theology – a way of knowing God through a deep personal awareness of the suffering Christ, comes through the diaries.⁵⁷ On a weekday service in 1786, for example, the congregation reflected on a scripture verse speaking of God seeking out his own sheep. They then prayed to “our dear Lord, the Elder of his church,” who “feeds his little sheep upon his holy wounds, which he felt for us.”⁵⁸

References to the Holy Spirit are common in Zeisberger’s preaching. Like Spangenberg, Zeisberger believed the Holy Spirit operated on the hearts of listeners to lead them to the Saviour. In 1783, as the missionaries struggled to undo the influence of non-Christian Indians on recently returned Indian brethren, Zeisberger found that the Spirit was “busy” to apply the sermon “to many a one’s heart.” The Spirit “brought them to the Saviour, and they sought to find forgiveness and rest for their hearts.” The Spirit “brought many a one to the Physician of his soul, that through His wounds he should be cured and made well.” The Spirit in fact “preaches among the brethren,” enabling them to understand the scripture more clearly. Zeisberger taught that the Holy Spirit was active “among the children of the world” and among Christians, “in whom he dwelleth.” He maintained that the Spirit was actively involved in the mission congregations to “adorn us for the Bridegroom of our souls,” Jesus. The mission congregations specifically prayed

⁵⁵ “Record of the Mission Conference Held in Goshen on the Muskingum from the Tenth to the Twenty-First of October [1803],” trans., Allen Zimmerman (Gnadenhutten, Ohio, 1954), 4, MAB.

⁵⁶ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:251.

⁵⁷ For more on Zinzendorf’s “Blood and Wounds” theology, see Arthur J. Freeman, *An Ecumenical Theology of the Heart: The Theology of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf* (Bethlehem: The Moravian Church in America, 1998).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 309.

to the Holy Spirit as God. After a sermon on the Holy Spirit, the congregation at New Gnadenhütten “thanked him for his unwearied, true care, patience, and long-suffering for us, begged him to forgive us all our sins ... and vowed to him obedience and faithfulness.”⁵⁹ While Zeisberger preferred to preach about the mercy and kindness of the Saviour through the Spirit, he also exhorted his Indian listeners to save themselves from judgment. While the Spirit was the “Comforter,” he also punished the people of the world for their unbelief. Apparently, this approach worked to make some concerned for their souls: the sister of Indian Abigail, who used to resist hearing about the Saviour, confessed that, “she did not wish to go with the devil into everlasting fire, as she had heard all the unbelievers would do.”⁶⁰

Missionaries were expected to preach using material from the Bible. Spangenberg believed that if only short passages of scripture were used in sermons, the Spirit would later help the listener recall these.⁶¹ The Moravian Brethren standardized preaching by specifying selections of biblical texts for each day of the year. These were printed in volumes known as the *Daily Texts* (*Losungen* in German). The Unity Elders’ Conference in Europe made new editions annually. The selections for each day contained a “watchword” from the Old Testament – so named because Zinzendorf used to present it to the congregation the day before he preached on it – and a “doctrinal text” from the New Testament, used to expound the watchword. A hymn stanza, called the “collect,”

⁵⁹ Ibid., 176, 330, 151, 192; Shutt, “Forging Identities,” 50. While the Bethlehem congregation also prayed to the Holy Spirit, the diaries reflect the less frequent use of feminine language to describe the Spirit in the post-Zinzendorf era. Phrases like “mother-care” or “mother-voice” of the Spirit were occasionally used.

⁶⁰ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:405-6. Cf. Conrad, who asserts that Zeisberger never preached on hell or judgment. Conrad, ““Struck in Their Hearts,”” 71.

⁶¹ Schattschneider, ““Souls for the Lamb,”” 152.

followed each daily selection.⁶² For an Epiphany sermon, Zeisberger “delivered the festival-discourse from the Scripture-verse: ‘Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation. When doubts and fears, a gloomy band – Beset my soul on every hand.’”⁶³

Zeisberger would likely have had access to both German and English editions of the *Daily Texts*; the official Fairfield Diaries have English text references.⁶⁴ Yet the editions were not always current. After the separation of the missionaries from the Ohio congregations in 1781 and the subsequent massacre at Gnadenhütten, communication between Bethlehem and the frontier was severely disrupted. Zeisberger mentions that the missionaries relied on the 1780 volume of the *Daily Texts* at the beginning of 1783. A visit from Brother Schebosh and John Weigand in the middle of the year provided them with the 1782 *Texts*, but fighting on the frontier at the end of the American Revolution hampered transportation and forced the congregation to use this same volume at the beginning of 1785. The *Texts* were finally up-to-date when a package arrived quite surprisingly from Bethlehem in March.⁶⁵ Zeisberger believed that the *Texts* provided “daily food and nourishment for our hearts.”⁶⁶ Sometimes the assigned text for a day seemed especially meaningful in the present circumstances. At the beginning of 1788, when the New Salem congregation was expanding, Zeisberger interpreted the text of Jeremiah 33:12, which speaks about God making the desolate lands fruitful again, to

⁶² Mueller, “Official Diary,” 30-1; Bliss, *Diary*, “Introduction,” xxxvi; Conrad, ““Struck in Their Hearts,”” 75-6.

⁶³ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:132.

⁶⁴ Mueller, “Official Diary,” 31.

⁶⁵ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:131, 213, 222.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 386

describe his hope that the gospel would indeed be spread to the spiritually barren parts of the world.⁶⁷

The indication from the diaries is that sermons were never read. This style of preaching provided a greater level of emotional connection between speaker and audience, creating frequent opportunities for “exhortation.” At some services, Zeisberger decided that certain problems in the life of the congregation ought to be addressed without the use of any scriptural or liturgical text. After some Indians had a drinking party close to New Salem, Zeisberger – ever-concerned about the threat of alcohol in the Indian congregations – used the sermon time and the communion service to give “an earnest discourse and exhortation” for the Indians to resist such activity.⁶⁸ More importantly, the emphasis on oral delivery was consistent with native practices of public speaking. Often times the Indian Helpers presented the gospel to visiting, or “strange” Indians using only verbal delivery. The former chief Gelelemend delivered “evangelical discourses ... to all visitors” and to the missionaries’ appreciation, commanded “much attention and respect.” The Helpers Samuel and Abraham actively “encouraged, edified, and exhorted” the Indian brethren in their homes.⁶⁹

As head of the mission conference for the Ohio congregations, Zeisberger was responsible for reporting directly to the mission board of the Provincial Helpers Conference at Bethlehem, directed by John Ettwein. While Zeisberger preached on a regular basis throughout his time in the Ohio and around the Great Lakes, he shared all ministerial responsibilities with other missionaries, especially Johann and Anna Margaretha Jungmann, Michael Jung, William Edwards, and Benjamin Mortimer, as well

⁶⁷ Ibid., 396-97.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 447.

⁶⁹ Goshen Diary, 7 August 1799, MS., MAB; Ibid., 166, 406-07, 447-49; Schutt, “Forging Identities,” 30.

as male and female Indian Helpers. On Sunday, September 14, 1783, for example, he preached the morning service. The following day he did the same. The Sunday of the 21st he read the communion liturgy, and the following Sunday he did this and preached to the children. Other missionaries took turns preaching, administering communion, or leading services for specific choirs. Zeisberger sometimes substituted readings for preaching. Since most of the Indian brethren were gone selling canoes in Detroit on the Sunday of October 5, 1783, he read sayings of Jesus from the *History of the Days of the Son of Man*. Most preaching was done in English or German with an Indian – typically one of the male Helpers – translating. “Interpreters” were truly co-preachers. Mortimer noted that, “Much depends upon the explanations given by him [the interpreter], and upon the character which he maintains in the congregation.”⁷⁰ If no translators were available, it was normally Zeisberger who preached, usually in Delaware. For instance, on November 30, 1783, when nearly all the men were hunting, “Br. David preached in the Indian language, for no interpreter was present, about the joy of the children of God at the incarnation of the Saviour, that he had taken our flesh and blood that he might offer himself for us upon the cross to reconcile us with God.”⁷¹ Services were also times to read the proceedings of synods in Europe or the American Provinces to inform the congregations of new developments within the Unity.

Baptism was one of the most important rituals over which Zeisberger presided. Baptism granted an individual entry into fuller liturgical participation with the church. Zeisberger, like all Moravian missionaries, was cautious in who he allowed to be

⁷⁰ Goshen Diary, 17 July 1799, MS., MAB.

⁷¹ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:165, 166, 173.

baptized, because baptism implied a deep personal commitment to the Saviour.⁷² In baptism, the individual made a “covenant” with the Saviour, which he or she renewed at the beginning of every calendar year.⁷³ Indians in Zeisberger’s congregations typically approached a missionary or baptized Indian with a request for baptism, rather than receiving an offer for baptism. Missionaries and Indian Helpers would observe the candidate and eventually interview him or her, asking personal questions about the candidate’s commitment to the Saviour and desire to live for him. Once they had demonstrated a sufficient commitment, a person was always baptized “into Jesus’ death,” as the baptized laid their hands on the believer.⁷⁴ After publicly affirming their new religion, the baptized Indian was given a new name – normally a biblical one – as an additional marker of belonging to the Saviour.⁷⁵ Indians often assumed new names at important points in their lives, and the practice of renaming at baptism meshed with native tradition in this regard.⁷⁶ Children born to baptized parents were baptized as infants – Ettwein encouraged baptisms before the first birthday – and given a Christian name.⁷⁷ Zeisberger did not see the need to re-baptize adults into the Gemeinde. For example, the elderly Amochol came to New Salem in 1788 expressing interest in joining the community. When he told the missionaries his mother had taken him to a French priest in Canada to be baptized as a boy, they agreed this was sufficient.⁷⁸ Especially since they were performed during services for the entire congregation, baptisms could be events where all observers could be drawn more deeply into the faith. At the baptism of

⁷² Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 61.

⁷³ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:174, 178, 387.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 181, 317.

⁷⁵ Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 160.

⁷⁶ Merritt, “Dreaming of the Savior’s Blood,” 740.

⁷⁷ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:294, 324, 345; Conrad, ““Struck in Their Hearts,”” 94.

⁷⁸ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:390-91.

the single woman Gustit, renamed Rachel, the unbaptized showed “great excitement” and some visiting Indians stood up on their benches for a better look. Zeisberger interpreted this interest as evidence of the continuing effectiveness of his missionary labor.⁷⁹

The highlight of Moravian religious life was the Lord’s Supper.⁸⁰ Communicants had their own special service called the “communion quarter-hour.” Liturgical elements such as singing and preaching were woven into the experience of partaking of the Lord’s Supper. The communion meal was nothing less than a time for the most spiritually devoted to experience deep intimacy and unity with the Saviour and with each other. Zeisberger’s post-1782 diaries often describe the delight of the communicants as they partook of the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ. Unlike baptisms, which were celebrated only when individual candidates underwent the ritual, communion was a more regular practice. Communion was always held on a Sunday, with the exception of Good Friday, and announced eight days before so the communicants could spend the week preparing their hearts to receive it. Communicants were not always able to participate in communion; the status of their hearts had to be examined first. Missionaries and Helpers interviewed each communicant during the week preceding the Lord’s Supper. They asked the communicant if he or she knew of any spiritual reason that would prohibit their participation – a brief lapse into sin, for instance. Zeisberger remarked in April 1785 that he found through interviewing the brethren “more in them to rejoice in than to be sad over.” When he thought they needed to strengthen their faith before partaking, he urged them in Zinzendorfian language to “cast a believing look into the wounds of our crucified

⁷⁹ Ibid., 462.

⁸⁰ Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 62.

Saviour.”⁸¹ Reflecting the Moravians’ fondness for language conveying the physicality of Jesus’s atonement, Zeisberger often described the communion ritual itself with language about Christ’s blood and death, and the spiritual blessings that they represented. After hearing the communion text one Sunday in late 1783, the brethren felt a sense of unity as they were “washed with the blood of Christ.” Often, Zeisberger writes that the communicants enjoyed the “sacrament of his body and blood with hungry and thirsty souls.” A feeling of unity through sharing in the suffering death of Christ was a goal of the communion ritual. In a communion quarter-hour sermon, Zeisberger preached that hatred for one another actually nullifies all the benefits of the Lord’s Supper among the brethren. As a means of practicing love and unity, the Indian brethren typically visited the homes of the missionaries for spiritual fellowship after each Lord’s Supper.⁸²

Although an emphasis on the blood, wounds, and death of Christ was less prominent among the later missionaries like Zeisberger,⁸³ Natives continued to show interest in these elements of Moravian religious life. As Merritt observes, for Indians, “the body was a central metaphor for religious expression,” and blood in particular had symbolic meanings of power for both men and women. During times of illness, some Indians actually found the missionaries’ practice of medicinal bloodletting attractive because it used the power of blood to heal their sick bodies. Communion, a Moravian “ritual of community renewal”⁸⁴ in which people partook of the body and blood of Christ together, was a means of obtaining power. Baptism “into the death [physical sufferings]

⁸¹ Goshen Diary, 22 September 1799, MS., MAB.

⁸² Bliss, *Diary*, 1:225, 139, 158, 165, 168, 173, 376, 230.

⁸³ Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 56. A study of three diary excerpts of roughly equal length from the Checomeco mission (ca. 1740-1746), Schönbrunn mission (1772-1777), and Lichtenau mission (1776-1780) reveals that the first contains significantly more references to Zinzendorffian “Blood and Wounds theology” than the later two.

⁸⁴ Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, quotation, 164.

of Christ,” was likewise a way of renewing or purifying oneself.⁸⁵ For some Indians, Moravian missionaries, who always directed baptismal and communion ceremonies, “acted as powerful shamans who dispensed the body of Christ and created a link between Indians and the spirit of the Lamb.”⁸⁶ Indians in the post-1782 mission congregations continued to derive a sense of power from the rituals of baptism and communion, especially during the hardships of famine, disease, and death they faced in the wake of the American Revolution. On the Good Friday service at New Salem in 1788, there was great emotional reaction among Christian and non-Christian Indians alike after reading throughout the day the traditional four-part history of Christ’s passion.

By consideration of all the sufferings, the scoffing and ignominy, reproach, bonds, and scourging, and his whole tortures from head to foot, hearts were mightily moved and many tears shed.... Of the new people came one after the other, for a long time, and till late in the night, complaining of their misery and wretched condition, with many tears, and gave us to understand their longing for the bath of holy baptism and cleansing away of their sins.... The assistants also ... [assembled] together baptized and unbaptized, so that they had no room in the house, ... and [they] spoke with great earnestness ... about the great love of the Saviour for poor sinners, whom he had brought to light through his bitter passion and countless sufferings, so that the whole town was aroused.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ See Freeman, *An Ecumenical Theology*, 282-84. Zinzendorf emphasized that baptism was purification in the blood and wounds of Christ.

⁸⁶ Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 112-121, “the body,” 112, “acted as,” 116-17.

⁸⁷ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:401, 403.

Ever cautious about whom they baptized, the missionaries baptized only three Indians on Easter, but not without baptized and unbaptized shedding “many tears.” For the “new people,” – most likely visiting Chippewas – as well as for the other Indians of the congregation, the description of the suffering Saviour evidently still had an intense emotional effect. Baptism was a means of experiencing a powerful connection to the sufferings of Jesus.

The physical sufferings of Jesus also featured prominently in the preaching of the Indian Helpers to fellow Indians. Samuel spoke to two Indians who visited New Salem in 1788. As they listened about the Saviour, they “... were so convinced of the truth, especially when he described to them the Saviour upon the cross, how his hands and feet were pierced with nails and his side transfixes, that they broke into floods of tears.” The same year, the Helpers Samuel, Abraham, and Boaz spoke with a Chippewa whose father had told him before he died that the “Indians were not upon the right way to eternal life, they would find it hard after this life, and had nothing good to hope, ... [but] that there were Indians who knew something better.” He learned from a dream four years earlier that the “believing Indians” would come to Pettquotting, and his son should “hold” to them, since “from them he would hear that which he should receive and believe.” Samuel then exhorted the Chippewa to reject heathen ways, since “it is all in vain, and brings no comfort nor hope,” but instead to embrace the Saviour, who “for our sins was nailed to the cross ... through his hands and feet, and his side was pierced through with a spear, for he poured out all his blood.” This made the Chippewa listen “devoutly, and [sit] a while deep in thought,” until he asked if the Saviour would come again. “Yes,” Samuel replied, and believers would be “glad and live with him forever, but the others will weep and

groan.” For these Native Christian preachers and their listeners, a theology of the suffering Saviour with whom the believer could have an intimate connection evidently had appeal.⁸⁸

As a reflection of the harmony of the *Gemeine*, “lovefeast” celebrations took place among specific choirs or with the entire congregation. Lovefeasts were liturgical meals designed to strengthen the *Gemeine* through reaffirmation of its commitment to the suffering Saviour.⁸⁹ The traditional lovefeast involved sitting at tables while servers brought beverages and bread. As the participants were eating they sang or listened to hymns, discussed spiritual matters, and sometimes listened as a missionary read news from the *Gemeinnachrichten*.⁹⁰ In early 1787, before leaving New Gnadenhütten due to threats of violence from nearby tribes, the congregation celebrated Epiphany with a lovefeast, where they were reminded of the other Moravian missions in Greenland, Surinam, and the West Indies. The Indian believers could “stand fast” as these other congregations, remembering that, “the Saviour had hitherto brought them through many trials, dangers, and temptations.” “... Even though a hard storm might still fall upon us,” Zeisberger wrote, “[The congregation] should cling the closer to the Saviour and put their trust in him alone, who would never bring them to shame.”⁹¹ The Indian congregations held lovefeasts during celebrations for baptisms, communion, and birthdays, as well as during holy days like Epiphany or Easter.⁹² The Indians incorporated aspects of their traditional culture into the lovefeast, including foods, oratory, singing, and celebration. In June 1800, a small group of baptized Indians gathered in Gelelemend’s home.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1:388, 447-49.

⁸⁹ Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 161.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 161-62.

⁹¹ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:318.

⁹² Ibid., 382, 182, 441, 318.

Gelelemend's former role as a chief gave him influence as a public speaker, and he addressed these members of the congregation three times. After the first speech, the Indians sang and had a meal of meat, vegetables, tea, and wheat flour cakes. Following the second speech, they sang verses in alternation. Following the third, they dismissed and resumed singing in their homes. Lovefeasts, often held as celebrations of baptism or admission to communion, were times when the Indians gathered without the company of the missionaries to express "the experience of their hearts," give "short exhortations," or sing verses in harmony. In contrast to Moravian tradition, a member of the congregation would host a lovefeast and typically provide food for everyone else. Lovefeasts were a special event for the Moravian Indians.⁹³

Celebrating special occasions, especially holy days, was always important for the Indian congregations. Christmas, Epiphany, Maundy-Thursdays, Good Friday, and Easter were particularly significant events for the community, as well as lesser celebrations like St. Thomas' Day and days to commemorate major events in the Moravian Church, like the Herrnhut revival of 1727. After Zeisberger had helped to regroup a handful of Indian brethren following the massacre, they observed the Easter season. These days followed the same ritual activity as usual. The Sunday before Easter, the Indians heard a sermon about Christ's passion, and were "exhorted to follow him ... step by step, and to observe him in all the scenes of his passion." The communicants had the Lord's Supper for the first time in two years. On Maundy-Thursdays, they heard a reading from the *History of the Days of the Son of Man* (likely Samuel Lieberkühn's harmonization of the gospels), followed by the ritual of footwashing. This common ritual, traditionally called the *Pedalavium*, was used especially for inclusion and absolution, and imitated Jesus' act of

⁹³ Goshen Diaries, 1 June 1800, MS., MAB.

humility and love for his disciples as described in the Gospel of John.⁹⁴ The Indians Sophia, Salome, and Adam were readmitted to the congregation afterward. The missionaries directed Good Friday observance using the story of Jesus' passion, which the congregation heard "with moved and melted hearts," followed with the recitation of the Easter liturgy. They had to forgo the normal lovefeast on Saturday "on account of our poverty," but heard a sermon on how Christ, through his death, became the believers' spiritual "portion." They also could not keep the tradition of visiting the congregation's cemetery, called "God's Acre," to remember and pray for their deceased friends and relatives, but had to observe the Easter litany that accompanied this event in the Gemeinhaus. A reading from *The History of the Resurrection* preceded a morning sermon from John Heckewelder.⁹⁵

Christmas also followed a liturgical pattern that highlighted both Jesus' incarnation and death for sinners. Christmas Eve was the highlight of liturgical activity and always began with a lovefeast. The brethren erected a manger for Jesus and sang to him as a way of offering "gifts" or "thank offerings." The activities at New Salem in 1788 were particularly moving: "... All present were much affected," commented Zeisberger. The brethren were very grateful that Jesus had "... Made himself known to his little band here, gathered from the heathen, ... of which the tears on many a cheek bore witness." Kneeling in front of the manger they, "Thanked the Saviour for his astonishingly great love ... that he had ... made known and assured to us by his blood."

⁹⁴ Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 163; John 13. See Freeman, *An Ecumenical Theology*, 287. For Zinzendorf, footwashing was "a rite for and expressive of the special relationships within the community that lived in close relationship with the Savior."

⁹⁵ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:199, 187, 143-44. It is significant to note that the congregation still had its liturgical books after Zeisberger and the other missionaries were captured and later released to their scattered congregation. Zeisberger proudly noted on February 14, 1783 that, "We have still kept our books, about which the warriors have not much troubled themselves."

As the diaries show, children played an important part in Christmas celebrations.

Zinzendorf and Spangenberg emphasized the role of children in the worship practices of the Brüdergemeine.⁹⁶ Children normally had their own service, where Zeisberger sometimes exhorted them to praise and rejoice in the infant Jesus through song. They knelt in front of a manger and sang praises to baby Jesus, giving “their childish thanks for his birth and incarnation.” On the night of Christmas Eve, they received candles to light their way to their homes as they continued to sing to the Saviour.⁹⁷

Song in fact constituted the major element of Moravian theological praxis.⁹⁸

Moravian hymnals provided thousands of hymns that the brethren worked into the *Daily Texts*, liturgies, and litanies for all manner of occasions. One practice, continued in the Indian congregations, was the *Singstunde* – a service exclusively of singing hymn texts selected to draw out a particular theological theme.⁹⁹ The diaries show the Indians had a fondness for singing. Hymn selections often focused on the suffering and death of Christ and the personal connection the believer had with the Saviour. The most favorite hymn of the Moravian Indians was “O World, See Thy Creator!” which Zeisberger had translated into Delaware. Mortimer wrote that the Indians sung this hymn “more than any other in their houses,” and that “children five years of age can repeat the whole of it.” In church it was sung “amidst a very solemn feeling, attended with many tears.”¹⁰⁰ The hymn reflects

⁹⁶ Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 179-81.

⁹⁷ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:210, 461, 252, 312.

⁹⁸ C. Daniel Crews, “Moravian Worship: The Why of Moravian Music,” in *The Music of the Moravian Church in America*, ed. Nola Reed Knouse (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 30, 38; Albert H. Frank and Nola Reed Knouse, “Hymnody of the Moravian Church,” in *Knouse Music of the Moravian Church*, 56-7.

⁹⁹ Nola Reed Knouse, “The Moravians and their Music,” in Krouse, *Music of the Moravian Church*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Goshen Diary, 20 December 1799, MS., MAB.

classic Zinzendorffian theology that the Creator of the world was the Saviour of the believer.¹⁰¹

O World, see thy Creator,
 Extended, like a traitor,
 Upon the cross's tree! ...
 Draw near: thou wilt discover,
 How blood and sweat all over
 His sacred body dies;
 Out of his heart most noble,
 For inexhausted trouble,
 Sighs are successive foll'wing sighs.¹⁰²

The Moravian Indians often sung for long periods of time. After a solemn Epiphany lovefeast at Goshen, the baptized brethren commemorated their baptisms by staying up late at night to sing “the praises of him who had washed them from their sins in his blood.”¹⁰³ Singing about the suffering Saviour was typical at times of dying. The Indian brethren seem to have adapted the Moravian practice of *Einsingen*, pastoral singing over a dying person, to traditional healing. After one service at Goshen, Indians assembled in a house “and sung verses together till late at night,” an activity in which the Indians found “particular delight.” They continued to sing “almost uninterruptedly for several weeks in succession,” typically assembling in a house where a sick child lay. As Gelelemend’s son Benjamin lay dying the Indians remained after the customary laying on

¹⁰¹ On the essence of Zinzendorf’s theology, see Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 223.

¹⁰² *A Collection of Hymns, for the Use of the Protestant Church, of the United Brethren* (Manchester: R&W Dean, 1809), 27, Google Books, <https://books.google.com>.

¹⁰³ Goshen Diary, 6 January 1800, MS., MAB.

of hands to sing around his bed all night. Something about the death and suffering of the Saviour, communicated through song, was appealing for these Indians as they handled challenges of death and disease at Goshen.¹⁰⁴

Perhaps recognizing the success of Moravian hymnody among the Indians, Zeisberger regularly translated hymns from German and English Moravian hymnals into Delaware. He compiled these translations to produce *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the Christian Indians of the Mission of the United Brethren in North America*, published in Philadelphia in 1803. This work, the first printed edition of Delaware hymns, may have been the most widely used translation of Zeisberger's in the Indian congregations, as George Henry Loskiel distributed the printed work to the congregation when he visited Goshen.¹⁰⁵ Zeisberger's 1802 letter dedicating the work to the Society for the Propagating of the Gospel among the Heathen is strikingly similar to a 1797 letter Ettwein penned at Fairfield in anticipation of the finished hymnal, indicating Zeisberger was working on it then. The hymns came from the "newest German and English hymnbooks" of the Moravian Church, which would have been the massive *Gesangbuch* of 1778 and the British hymnal of 1801. Zeisberger wrote that the Indians "find much pleasure in learning verses with their tunes by heart, and frequently sing and meditate on them at home and abroad." Memorizing hymns had been an important part of Moravian worship since the time of Zinzendorf. The significance of this was, as Zeisberger noted,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 21 July 1799, 12 August 1799, MS., MAB. See Amy C. Schutt, "Delawares in Eastern Ohio after the Treaty of Greenville: The Goshen Mission in Context," in *Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700-1850*, ed. Charles Beatty-Medina and Melissa Rinehart (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 111-36, who interprets the episode of singing over the sick child as the Indians secretly practicing traditional healing practices.

¹⁰⁵ Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 96, n. 24; De Schweinitz, *David Zeisberger*, 663. The Goshen congregation did receive at least two printed copies of Zeisberger's *Spelling Book* in November 1806.

to imprint Moravian doctrine on believers' memories, especially those of children.¹⁰⁶

Like other liturgical works he translated, Zeisberger intended the Delaware hymnbook to facilitate smoother passage of Moravian teaching from missionary to Indian congregation.¹⁰⁷

Both the Indians and the missionaries constructed the mission towns. The Ohio mission towns were laid out similar to Bethlehem. Bethlehem was arranged as a town with several broad east-west streets intersecting perpendicularly to a main north-south street. Buildings were on both sides of the streets. Displayed conspicuously at the center of the town was the *Gemeinhaus* where the congregation met for worship. Because the Moravians produced most of their food from agriculture, they created large fenced fields on the edge of the town. Smaller buildings, often for tradework, sometimes lay outside the central town. Bethlehem was also strategically located on the Lehigh River. The mission settlements were smaller and more compact, but like Bethlehem had buildings that bordered broad streets with fields around them. Each settlement was divided into individual, side-by-side lots for Indian families with huts that faced the street and a small field, often for growing corn, behind each hut. At Schönbrunn and the Gnadenhütten settlement destroyed in 1782, the *Gemeinhaus* sat at the intersection of two perpendicular streets, with hut and field lots bordering them, and outlying workshops.¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁶ Zeisberger to The Society of United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, Goshen, 30 September 1802, MS., MAB; Ettwein to Brethren's Society for propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, 24 August 1797, MS., MAB; Albert H. Frank and Nola Reed Knouse, "Hymnody of the Moravian Church," in Knouse *Music of the Moravian Church*, 51; Nola Reed Knouse, "The Moravians and their Music," in Knouse, *Music of the Moravian Church*, 16-17; Hamilton, "John Ettwein," 196, n. 65. Hamilton believes Zeisberger asked Ettwein to write a dedicatory letter in 1797, which Zeisberger essentially copied when he finished the manuscript.

¹⁰⁷ "Record of the Mission Conference Held in Goshen on the Muskingum from the Tenth to the Twenty-First of October [1803]," trans., Allen Zimmerman (Gnadenhutten, Ohio, 1954), 5-6, MAB.

¹⁰⁸ Michael E. Whitehead, "Transmission by Design: Archaeo-Geophysics and the Built Environment of the Moravian Gnadenhutten Mission, Ohio" (MA Thesis: Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2014), 96-

settlements always had at least one burial plot called God's Acre, adjacent to the town. All the Ohio settlements were along the Muskingum River, and the Fairfield settlement sat on the Thames in Ontario.

The mission towns provided for relative similarity to traditional Delaware ways of life. Delaware Indian towns were also normally built alongside bodies of water on elevated ground to avoid flooding. The Delawares had adopted European style homes prior to Moravian arrival, which were hut structures with high, pitched roofs and block walls. The Moravian design of separate lots for each family was in keeping with the Delaware preference for single-family dwellings and differed from the longhouse dwellings of the Iroquois or Mingo. Delaware homes, however, were typically farther apart from each other than in the mission settlements and, according to Zeisberger, towns were not laid out in an organized manner.¹⁰⁹ Prior to Moravian arrival, Delawares had learned to domesticate animals such as pigs, cattle, and chickens. Christian Indians used their lots to plant traditional crops like beans, squash, and especially corn, although fencing fields was a relatively new practice at the time they moved into the Ohio Valley.¹¹⁰ The Christian Indians relied heavily on hunting to obtain their food, especially during the multiple occasions that famine plagued Indian lands in the Upper Ohio Valley and made crops difficult to grow. When the congregation was still regrouping in late 1783, the Indians planted a type of corn not suited to the local soil and failed to get a good harvest. In 1784 they again faced a food shortage. Multiple times Zeisberger

100, ProQuest (1555541).

¹⁰⁹ A.B. Hulbert and W. N. Schwarze, eds., "David Zeisberger's History of the Northern American Indians," *Ohio History Journal* 19, no. 1-2 (January-April 1910): 17-18, 87.

¹¹⁰ Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 18.

successfully petitioned British authorities at Detroit for a loan of foodstuffs.¹¹¹ Zeisberger did not insist that the Christian Indians give up their traditional diet or hunting practices. Often times, the Indian brothers would leave for days or even weeks at a time to hunt game, especially at the Goshen mission when the deer population was increasingly scarce from white settlement. Animals like horses or cows were the property of the mission, as well as profits derived from their sale. Created items like canoes or baskets were the property of the mission until they were sold and the profit given to the maker.¹¹² The relative freedom the Moravian Indians had to leave the mission towns to hunt, produce goods, and trade is a reflection of the “permeable boundaries” of the towns and was a decisive factor in their regrowth.

Moravian leaders recognized the significance of using native languages to transmit their theology. More than Zinzendorf, Spangenberg advocated the use of native languages, asking missionaries to produce translations of scripture, hymns, and short books. Schooling, primarily for children, but also adults, should teach indigenous peoples how to read parts of the Bible in their own language. From the beginning of Moravian missions in North America, missionaries studied Indian languages for the purposes of preaching, teaching, and translation. The Bethlehem missionary school where David Zeisberger was one of the first students was especially for the purpose of teaching Indian languages. Zeisberger was perhaps the most skilled linguist of the Moravian missionaries in North America, and he used his knowledge of Native languages in his missionary labors throughout his career. Like other Moravian missionaries, Zeisberger did not see any problem with expressing Christian theology through indigenous language. He stands

¹¹¹ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:164-65, 144, 154-55, 188-89.

¹¹² “Protocol of the Conference and Lagundo-Utenünk on 12 August 1772,” in Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 555-59.

in contrast, for instance, with the one-time missionary to the Indians of Stockbridge, Jonathan Edwards, who held that the Indians should only learn English, since “their own barbarous languages ... [are] exceedingly barren and very unfit to express moral and divine things.”¹¹³ There is no evidence that Zeisberger viewed his use of Indian languages as merely a starting point for evangelization; that is, as a means of gaining some initial converts, but that should be abandoned once he had educated them enough in European languages. Like Zinzendorf himself, Zeisberger recognized that translation of scripture and liturgical works helped indigenous peoples develop a self-sustaining Moravian Christianity.¹¹⁴ Documentary evidence points to the conclusion that Zeisberger wanted to preserve Moravian theological teachings in Native languages.

During the last ten years of his life, under the charge of John Ettwein, Zeisberger edited and completed several liturgical and instructional works in the Delaware language.¹¹⁵ These were not strictly original works; Zeisberger only translated what other influential Moravians had written or articulated theology that was representative of what Bethlehem leaders held. They are, however, unlike the diaries, outstanding examples of his tremendous linguistic creativity. While at Goshen, he made a translation of Samuel Lieberkühn’s 1769 *Harmony of the Gospels*, “a work that cost him infinite trouble, and upon which he expended the greatest care.”¹¹⁶ This work interspersed hymn stanzas from the *Gesangbuch* with scripture, and was the basis for services eight to ten days before Easter.¹¹⁷ Zeisberger likely made a working version before 1780 with assistance from at

¹¹³ Edwards to Isaac Hollis, Summer 1751, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Letters and Personal Writings*, vol. 16, ed. George S. Claghorn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 389.

¹¹⁴ Schattschneider, “Souls for the Lamb,” 99.

¹¹⁵ Hamilton, “John Ettwein,” 195.

¹¹⁶ De Schweinitz, *David Zeisberger*, 667.

¹¹⁷ Albert H. Frank and Nola Reed Knouse, “Hymnody of the Moravian Church,” in *The Music of the Moravian Church in America*, ed. Nola Reed Knouse (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 57.

least one Indian Helper, but finished the manuscript at his superiors' insistence in 1806.¹¹⁸ The first published version, which did not appear until 1821, totals 222 pages and contains an English translation of the Preface dedicating the work to the Moravian Indians.¹¹⁹ The Preface tells the reader she "will find ... the history of [Jesus'] birth, the signs and wonders which he wrought, how he went about doing good, his doctrines, and that he preached repentance and remission of sins to mankind.... You will read here, that he suffered much to accomplish the work of our redemption." In keeping with the Moravian belief that the Holy Spirit impressed knowledge of the Saviour on human hearts, Zeisberger told the Moravian Indian that by reading the words of the gospels, she would "not only have the advantage of becoming better acquainted with the words and history of Jesus Christ, ... but ... the Holy Ghost will open your apprehension and understanding."¹²⁰ A harmonization of the four gospels was ideal for Moravian Indian congregations. Unlike the seventeenth-century Puritan missionary John Eliot, who translated the entire Bible into the Massachusetts Algonquian language, Zeisberger never thought of such a task. Because the main task of the missionary was to preach generally about the atoning death of Christ for sinners and not to provide a detailed exegesis of scripture, short passages of the Bible, particularly from the gospels, were all that was essential. Also, because devotional practices were primarily performed with others rather

¹¹⁸ John Heckewelder, "Remarks on Zeisberger's Linguistic Works [Apr 1819]," MS., MAB. John Heckewelder wrote that Zeisberger made a Delaware "translation of the 4 Gospels" between 1770 and 1780 with the help of an Indian named Samuel Moore, once part of the missionary David Brainerd's New Jersey congregation. Heckewelder maintained that this work "has ever since been in use, it is perfectly well understood by the Indians, & has been a blessing to many." Spangenberg mentions in his *Account* (pp. 82-83), first written in 1782, an extant Delaware translation of a harmony of the gospels. However, Loskiel directly asked him to finish the nearly complete satisfactory translation in October 1803. "Conference Held in Goshen [1803]," 4, MAB.

¹¹⁹ De Schweinitz, *David Zeisberger*, 689-90.

¹²⁰ Samuel Lieberkuhn, *The History of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Comprehending all that the Four Evangelists have Recorded Concerning Him....*, trans. David Zeisberger (New York: Daniel Fanshaw, 1821), "Preface."

than alone, individual Bible reading was never a major focus. For schooling, Moravians agreed that using the Bible as a mere “reading book” was an abuse of scripture.¹²¹ Brief, Christocentric scripture texts were the most helpful for softening one’s heart toward the Saviour. Heckewelder observed that

... [T]he missionaries of the Br[ethren] among the Ind[ians] have found by experience that connected Scripture passages such as the 4 Gospels are far better understood by them than translations of Scripture in separate chapters and as any Indian that can read and has a book will have it with him wherever he is, whether on a journey or hunting or at sugar camp [sugar-making site], he will not only himself without an expounder understand what he reads but others will likewise be benefitted by his reading to them.¹²²

The harmonized texts simplified both the format and content of the gospel accounts, making it unnecessary to rely on a missionary to understand the Bible. It is clear that Zeisberger intended the *Harmony of the Gospels* as a pedagogical tool: Indians were to teach Indians about the Saviour from the scriptures. A smaller book was ideal for the peregrinating Indians who could take it with them on hunting or trading excursions. The religious activity within the mission settlements was therefore extended, and any literate Christian Delaware could spread the gospel.

Like other missionaries before and after him, Zeisberger knew that literacy was important for teaching Christianity. Unlike some missionaries, however, he taught his students to read and write in their native language. In fact, he initially taught only in “the Indian tongue.” As the Moravian Indians had greater contact with English speakers

¹²¹ “Extract out of the Protocoll of the Provinzial Conferenz [18 Oct – 30 Oct 1802],” MS., Supplement to the results of the American Provincial Synod, held in Bethlehem, Pa., MAB.

¹²² Heckewelder, “Remarks,” MAB.

settling into the Ohio country, they requested that the missionaries teach them English. Indian Brethren sometimes hired themselves out to Anglo-American farmers or merchants and felt that greater knowledge of English would help them obtain work. By 1789, both children and adults studied in the schools. In Ohio, Zeisberger established a mission school at Schönbrunn that drew over one hundred children by 1775, and with only brief interludes, the schools continued to operate through Zeisberger's death in 1808. For most of the post-Gnadenhütten missions, Gottlob Sensemann, John Hagen, and John Haven led the instruction, but Zeisberger dedicated himself to improving the curriculum.¹²³

One of the most intriguing works Zeisberger created was the *Delaware Indian and English Spelling Book*. This work is essentially a textbook covering the significant components of the curriculum at the mission schools and is an accurate indication of what they taught. Dissatisfied with the first edition of 1776, Zeisberger edited the book in 1806 while at Goshen.¹²⁴ This second edition consists of a Delaware pronunciation guide and dictionary ("spelling book"); "A Short History of the Bible," written in Delaware in the left column and English in the right; Delaware translations of well-known Bible stories; a translation of the parable of the Good Samaritan; "A Verb of the Indian Language," or examples of conjugated verbs; and finally, a multiplication table with spelled numbers in Delaware and corresponding Latin numerals. The first section of the book is a Delaware-to-English dictionary consisting of over four thousand words, arranged in sections according number of syllables (from one to more than seven). It is evident that the

¹²³ Conrad, "'Struck in Their Hearts,'" 91.

¹²⁴ Ibid.; Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 292, 355. Zeisberger first noted in late 1775 the difficulty he and John Heckewelder faced in teaching the children without any appropriate books. Though he made the first version of the *Spelling Book* the following year, he indicated his dissatisfaction at the beginning of 1777 that, "We have not yet solved the problem of having no books for them."

dictionary emerges from years of exposure to the Delaware tongue: terms run the gamut of Delaware language. Examples include: *Ma'nask* (second crop); *Hup'peechk* (rainworm); *Pi'mo'a'can* (sweathouse); *Wu'li'na'xin* (to appear well, fine); *Wi'sach'ga'mall'so'a'gan* (bitter pain); and *Pech'pom'ma'uch'so'halu'wet* (Saviour). The “Short History of the Bible” provides a good indication of the theological content Zeisberger taught both children and adults. It covers stories of creation, man’s fall into sin, Noah and the flood, Abraham, Joseph, exodus from Egypt under Moses, the prophets like Samuel and kings like David, Israel’s captivity in and return from Babylon, the first and second coming of Jesus, and injunctions to live a holy life as a Christian. Zeisberger includes the doctrine of original sin when he wrote that Adam and Eve “begat Children after their own Image, who like them were Sinners.” He describes God’s judgment of the Israelites who he made die in the wilderness because of their disobedience. One reads that Jesus “will once come again as the Judge of the World, raise the dead, cast the Wicked into hell and take the righteous with him into heaven.”¹²⁵ Zeisberger added bits of explanatory commentary to this rather standard evangelical interpretation of the Bible. After explaining the altar Noah built to God, Zeisberger wrote that, “In this Manner was God worshipped publicly in old time in the open Air, for there were then no Churches.” He explained that after this, mankind “no longer worshipped God the Creator of Heaven and Earth alone but also the Sun, Moon and Stars and even Images of Gold, Silver, Wood & Stone. This is called Idolatry.” David is “Author of most of the excellent divine Songs called the Psalms.” Although instruction in English was a significant part of the curriculum, so was instruction in reading and writing Delaware; Zeisberger intended to

¹²⁵ Conrad, ““Struck in Their Hearts,”” 71. This statement offers counter-evidence to Conrad’s assertion that Zeisberger never preached on heaven, hell, or Judgment Day.

give a bilingual education. The large scope and detail of this book, as well as the Delawares' expressed interest in learning English, lend support for the idea that Zeisberger intended it for both children and adults. Similar to his wishes for the *Harmony of the Gospels*, Zeisberger hoped the *Spelling Book* would help the Natives even teach themselves about language and Christian doctrine.

The *Spelling Book* proved limited in its usefulness, however. Although he was aware of distinct dialects within the Delaware language,¹²⁶ he did not arrange his dictionary with these distinctions in mind. Zeisberger and other missionaries initially learned Unami Delaware and interacted mostly with Unami speakers. Several years before moving into Ohio country, Zeisberger encountered more Munsee Delaware and exerted himself in learning their language, which he found to be quite different.¹²⁷ It is likely that much of the vocabulary that appeared in the *Spelling Book* came out of this period of study. When Zeisberger began compiling Delaware words to form a grammar, most of the Indians with whom he interacted spoke the Munsee dialect. Most of the Delawares on the western edge of the tribe's diaspora into the western Ohio Valley in the later part of the century spoke the Unami dialect.¹²⁸ This explains why Abraham Luckenbach and John Kluge, missionaries to the Delawares living in Indiana Territory, found Zeisberger's translations to be of little help working with Unami speakers. Kluge complained in 1802 about his difficulty learning the Delaware language without a good dictionary. The *Spelling Book*, "according to the Indians is full of Monsey words, while

¹²⁶ Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 16.

¹²⁷ Schutt, "Forging Identities," 227.

¹²⁸ Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 16-17; Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 38, 40.

here, nothing but Delaware is spoken.”¹²⁹ Two years later, Luckenbach wrote to Loskiel, expressing his frustrations with learning the language. Zeisberger’s translations are not very helpful, he said, “because he mixes the Monsey and the Unami.... [H]ere, nothing but the Unami is spoken.” The Delaware language has the three “very different” dialects of Monsey, Unami, and Unalachtikos, or as the Unamis call it, ‘Woapamachkis,’ which all of them can understand pretty well.”¹³⁰ The higher percentage of Unami-speakers living outside the mission towns after 1782 and the linguistic diversity in the multiethnic native communities around the Great Lakes made it difficult to use a written source of linguistic knowledge. Although older missionaries like Zeisberger and Heckewelder recognized the importance of learning Indians languages orally,¹³¹ Kluge and Luckenbach, rushed to establish a new mission, spent too little time learning Delaware this way. Thus, while the *Delaware Indian and English Spelling Book* may have been useful among Delawares in the mission towns, it proved severely limited as a resource for the new congregations Zeisberger wanted to create.

One notices that these translated works contain English but not German, despite the fact that German was Zeisberger’s native language and one he typically used in diaries and letters to other Moravian leaders. There are several reasons for this. Perhaps most obvious is the fact that many Delawares in his congregations could speak English, and, indeed, wanted to learn English. Zeisberger intended these works for regular use in

¹²⁹ John Kluge to Jacob Van Vleck, 20 March 1802, in Lawrence Henry Gipson, ed., *The Moravian Indian Mission on White River: Diaries and Letters, May 5, 1799 to November 12, 1806* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1938), 469. In saying that “here, nothing but Delaware is spoken,” Kluge may have held the belief that the Munsees were a different nation that had amalgamated with the Delaware, in fact, Zeisberger’s view.

¹³⁰ Abraham Luckenbach to George Henry Loskiel, 7 Apr 1804, in *Ibid.*, 516. Despite his reservations about the *Spelling Book*, he requested a copy of Zeisberger’s Delaware hymnbook.

¹³¹ John Heckewelder, “History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States,” ed. William C. Reichel (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876), 302.

services, homes, schools, and in private. He also knew that publishing his translations depended on English-speakers involved with the Society for Propagating the Gospel. Including English translations of Bible references, hymn titles, and significant portions of theological instruction like the “Short History of the Bible” was one way leaders could ensure his work conformed to the teachings of the Unity of the Brethren. John Ettwein emphasized the need for missionaries to put Christian truths in language that provided theologically orthodox meaning.¹³² Perhaps more significantly, Zeisberger could provide an Indian translation while fulfilling the wishes of the Provincial Elders’ Conference to instruct more frequently in English. Before Zeisberger finished these works, leaders at the 1802 Conference of the American Provincial Synod in Bethlehem urged labourers (ministers) to preach and teach more often in English and encourage German members of their congregations to learn English. Likewise, the Moravian church would increase its efforts to translate books from German to English.¹³³ As towns like Bethlehem and Lititz became increasingly open to the ever-growing numbers of English speakers around them, more Moravians were interested in adopting the new language. Zeisberger’s efforts to teach the Indians English were therefore part of the Moravian Church’s broader effort to adopt English. Another reason why the works contain English instead of German concerns the funding of the missions. Translations employing English would better enable Zeisberger’s works to circulate among Anglo missions financiers in American and British cities. Even if the inclusion of English in these works is evidence he had a non-Indian audience in mind, Zeisberger’s primary audience was the Indians themselves. He

¹³² Hamilton, “John Ettwein,” 343-44.

¹³³ “Extract [1802],” MS., MAB.

intended his translations as useful religious works, during and after his life, for Moravian Delaware Indians and their missionary teachers.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which Zeisberger changed the Delaware language by rendering its oral form into a written form. From the beginning of his missionary career, Zeisberger translated Christian hymns and scripture into native languages. He often consulted Indian Helpers during the translation process, typically a group of Helpers who were appointed for translation work.¹³⁴ Spangenberg wrote in 1788 that Moravian missionaries based their grammars on careful listening to the native languages. If they observed that the natives desired new words to express something, the missionaries provided them with new vocabulary, or the natives invented new terms for themselves. “All this is a tedious affair, but not without its usefulness.”¹³⁵ Ettwein expressed impatience with just how tedious this process was. Reflecting his more comfortable attitude toward English notions of civility, he complained that Indian languages were “poverty-stricken” and often had “no words at all” to express Christian things. The missionaries were also “too hesitant in introducing words from other languages and making them intelligible by means of explanations.” He noted, for example, that there was no Delaware word for “man,” but only “Indian” and “white man.”¹³⁶ Zeisberger did in fact invent the word “len’no” for “a man.” He also included in his *Spelling Book* an Unami word for their own people, *Lenape*, to which he added the English meaning, “a Man.” To the Unami’s the word could mean “a male of our kind,” or

¹³⁴ Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 96, n. 24., 128; “Protocol of the Conference and Lagundo-Utenünk on 12 August 1772,” in Wellenreuther and Wessel, *Diaries of David Zeisberger*, 555-59.

¹³⁵ Spangenberg, *Account*, 82-83, MAB.

¹³⁶ Hamilton, “John Ettwein,” 343-44.

“common,” “real,” or “original” people.¹³⁷ Thus, while Zeisberger’s definition did not explicitly introduce a gendered or singular meaning, it did possibly restrict the pluralized meaning of the term. Additionally, he used the word *Pem’ha’ka’mi’xit* to refer to equally to “mankind” and “the world.” However, while the *Spelling Book* reflects some changes to Delaware language, it is difficult to discern how they would have been interpreted by the mostly Munsee population with whom Zeisberger lived. The Munsee, for instance, do not appear to have used the term *Lenape*.¹³⁸ Furthermore, Zeisberger noted that the Delawares (a European term the Indians never used) also called themselves *Woapanachke*, meaning “people living towards the rising of the sun.” Unamis usually referred to themselves by the word *Indellowen*, a verb meaning “I say.”¹³⁹ The present study is not intended to offer major linguistic analysis. It is safe to say that from the complexities of Delaware names that Zeisberger’s modifications did not entirely change the meaning of these terms. Zeisberger did introduce new terms from a European worldview that represented concepts foreign to the Indians, and he believed the introduction of Christian vocabulary enhanced native languages with something they previously lacked.¹⁴⁰ It is not surprising to find evidence suggesting the most significant change to the language was the introduction of Christian theological concepts. Benjamin Mortimer gives a clue to the extent of this change when he expresses frustration about evangelizing the Chippewa Indians around the Fairfield, Ontario mission. Even though the Chippewas understood many Delaware words, “it is impossible for them to

¹³⁷ Schutt, “Forging Identities,” 81, n. 31; Mueller, “Official Diary,” 56, n. 50; Heckewelder, “History, Manners, and Customs,” 124. John Heckewelder wrote that the Delawares first called white people *Wapsid Lenape*; evidently *Lenape* did not exclusively refer to Indians.

¹³⁸ Schutt, “Forging Identities,” 81, n. 31.

¹³⁹ Hulbert and Schwarze, “History of the Northern American Indians,” 114.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

comprehend the plainest and most simple evangelical testimony in that language.”¹⁴¹

Some translated terms, however, had a greater overlap between European and Native ways of thinking. The word “holy,” which Zeisberger translated as “quite clean,” gives one example.¹⁴² In Moravian theology, holiness was frequently connected with the atoning blood of Christ. Believers experienced a kind of cleansing by the blood of Jesus as demonstrated in the rituals of baptism and communion. The diaries refer to believers who were “washed with the Saviour’s blood.” Blood cleansed the entirety of the believer. As one Christian Indian explained it to others, “...The Saviour has washed us from our sins by his blood, and prepared our hearts and bodies that he may dwell therein. Henceforth we should not defile God’s temple [our bodies], nor again let in the old sinful things from which our Saviour has washed and cleansed us.”¹⁴³ In Indian cultures, cleanliness was sometimes associated with integrity or honesty of speech or action. Before giving a speech, leaders would symbolically cleanse their throats, eyes, ears, and hearts to demonstrate they would speak and listen to the truth.¹⁴⁴ Although Ettwein suggested Zeisberger’s translation of “holy” merely accommodated the “poverty-stricken” nature of Indian languages, Zeisberger was not deviating much from Moravian concepts of holiness.¹⁴⁵ He was also rendering the term in a way that overlapped with Delaware concepts of purity. Even if Zeisberger and the missionaries adjusted their theological expression, overall it was the Moravian Indians who experienced the greatest linguistic change.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ “Diary of Br. & Sr. Zeisberger and Br. Benj. Mortimer” [15 Aug 1798], MS., MAB.

¹⁴² Conrad, ““Struck in their Hearts,”” 70-1.

¹⁴³ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:397, 173, 357, “...The Saviour,” 1:330; Goshen Diary, 6 January 1800, MS., MAB.

¹⁴⁴ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 112.

¹⁴⁵ Hamilton, “John Ettwein,” 344. Conrad misses the overlap of this translation with traditional Moravian theology.

¹⁴⁶ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 106.

Chapter Four: Nativism, Bureaucratic Missions, and the Breakdown of “Permeable Boundaries”

Radical changes outside and inside the Moravian Church prompted a change in how the Brüdergemeine maintained its missionary enterprise. From the outside, the American defeat of the British in 1781 meant the end of Moravian negotiations with colonial legislatures over obtaining land on which to build mission towns. The Moravian Church would now have to deal with the United States as a new political entity. Also, the tribes that previously had a barrier against an expanding American Republic gradually lost that with the removal of British restrictions against western settlement. The Moravians, furthermore, were not as dependent on gaining the permission of particular tribes before moving onto their lands. Inside the Church, privatization of labor in Bethlehem and contact with non-Moravians continued to increase, while the Oeconomy was only a memory. Families were increasingly preoccupied with integrating with the surrounding American economy. Politically, Bethlehem had moved from a “passive Loyalism” to a “pro-American” stance by the end of the Revolutionary War.¹⁴⁷ John Ettwein, the director of the Provincial Helpers’ Conference, developed close relationships with influential Americans like the South Carolina congressman Henry Laurens. Ettwein even corresponded with George Washington. Despite Ettwein’s firm commitment to pacifism during the War, he viewed such leaders as allies in the Moravian missionary effort in the new nation. But non-Moravians, especially Anglo-Americans, had always shown suspicion about these German immigrants with a fondness for the blood and wounds of Christ and devotion to the ideals of the eccentric Count Zinzendorf. Although widely known for their missions, actual relationships with the Indians – who most Euro-

¹⁴⁷ Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 40.

Americans viewed as a threat to the prosperity of the new country – became a liability for the Gemeine.¹⁴⁸ Entrusting missions to the bureaucratic structures of the Unity and professional missionaries like Zeisberger helped residents in Bethlehem to win the trust of their neighbors.¹⁴⁹

Crisis and Cultural Adaptation in the Moravian Church

While Zeisberger was struggling to reassemble the scattered Indian congregation, leaders in Bethlehem were occupied with preventing moral mayhem. A decline in worship attendance, a rise in sexual activity among the youth, public drinking, and simple ignorance of church practices were significant problems. As early as 1768, the Provincial Synod at Lititz had to tell the town and country labourers to encourage each family in their congregations to purchase the *Daily Texts* so they could better familiarize themselves with the church's doctrine.¹⁵⁰ At the 1781 Synod, Bishop Reichel decried the moral laxity among the congregations in "very expressive and emphatical Terms." "... It is greatly to be lamented," he bemoaned, "That there are so many in our Societies, who ... have not the least desire towards our Saviour, whom we have Reason to be ashamed of before the World and other religious People, as it is notorious, that they are given up to this or that Vice." Parents especially must do a better job enforcing religious discipline in their homes through holding regular devotions and correcting immoral behavior. Every family ought to own a Bible. "They that cannot give themselves entirely up to the

¹⁴⁸ Engel, *Religion and Profit*, 186-88. Bethlehem residents distanced themselves from the Moravian Indians after the Indians were forced to flee for safety to a barracks in Philadelphia in 1763 during the Paxton Boys riots. The increased Indian-white hostilities after the Seven Years' War made Bethlehem move the mission towns farther away. Bethlehem expelled its four Indian residents in January 1764, when they eventually joined the Friedenshütten mission at Wyalusing.

¹⁴⁹ Smaby, *Transformation of Moravian Bethlehem*, 40.

¹⁵⁰ "Result of the Provincial-Synod held at Lititz [20 Oct – 23 Oct 1768]," MS., MAB.

Direction of our Saviour,” Reichel declared, “... cannot belong to us.”¹⁵¹ Between 1780 and 1801, there were high numbers of expulsions from the Moravian Church, often for immoral behavior or a clash with authorities.¹⁵² It was not only the mission congregations that had difficulty enforcing their high standards for membership.

Despite their internal difficulties, the Moravians found their reputation in the early Republic improved. As the nation’s leaders turned their approach to handling the Indians from military conquest to cultural domination through inculcating the habits of civilized societies, the Moravians seemed a natural ally.¹⁵³ Among the churches and missionary organizations the United States government sought for this project, the Moravians were highlighted for their long experience with Indian missions. Despite this new support, however, the bureaucratic nature of missionary labor in the era of professional missionaries kept many church members from participating. Labourers at the Synod of 1790 encouraged the Brethren and Sisters “to take an effectual share, to support this great matter, the missions among the heathen, as much as they can.” While the supply of missionaries was dwindling, the fame of the Moravians as a courageous missionary people was growing.¹⁵⁴ Agreeing that, “the publication of the history of our mission among the Indians would prove beneficial,” the Moravian Church in America supported the creation of literature that would educate the broader public about its missionary

¹⁵¹ “Conferences kept with the Labourers of the City and Country Congregations in Bethlehem [26 Apr – 28 Apr 1781],” MS., supplement to the results of the American Provincial Synod, held in Bethlehem, Pa., MAB.

¹⁵² Bettina Hessler, “Transatlantic Religion and Nation Formation in America: The Moravian Church, 1735-1818” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2011), 207-08, ProQuest (3488477).

¹⁵³ Ibid., 190-91; Amy C. Schutt, “Delawares in Eastern Ohio after the Treaty of Greenville: The Goshen Mission in Context,” in *Contested Territories: Native Americans and Non-Natives in the Lower Great Lakes, 1700-1850*, ed. Charles Beatty-Medina and Melissa Rinehart (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012), 115-16.

¹⁵⁴ Hessler, “Transatlantic Religion,” 197-98.

labors.¹⁵⁵ The *Periodical Accounts*, first published in March 1790, was the first major missionary journal published in England, and was intended to update the church's "friends" as well as promote Moravian missions to potential supporters within the international evangelical missionary movement.¹⁵⁶ Circulated among English-speaking church leaders and philanthropists in Europe and America, the *Periodical Accounts* presented highly edited snippets from Zeisberger's diaries. Zeisberger also corresponded with George Henry Loskiel, whose massive *History of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Indians in North America* was published in German in 1789 and in English five years later. The 1802 Synod in Bethlehem listed Loskiel's *History* as one of ten required books for every congregation's library – along with mission histories of Greenland and the West Indies – and encouraged all congregations to subscribe to the *Periodical Accounts*.¹⁵⁷ Zeisberger's role as missionary was thus an important part of the American Gemeine's understanding of themselves as primarily a missionary people, whose heritage was useful in the development of the new nation.

*Nativism, the White River Mission, and Interpretation
of the Gnadenhütten Massacre*

When Zeisberger returned to the Ohio Valley in August 1798 it was at the directive of the Mission Board, not at the request of the Delaware tribe as in 1772. Although he did receive an invitation to move the mission farther west to the White River, he failed to understand the extent to which the Delawares had placed the Moravians firmly on the side of the Americans they vigorously opposed during and after the

¹⁵⁵ "Protocoll of the Conference held at Lititz [7 May – 8 May, 1790] MS., MAB.

¹⁵⁶ Felicity Jensz, "Overcoming Objections to Print: The Moravian Periodical Accounts and the Pressure of Publishing in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Journal of Moravian History* 15, no. 1, (2015): 2, 16-18.

¹⁵⁷ "Extract [1802]," MS., MAB.

Revolution. Perhaps emboldened by American defeat of militant Indian resistance, he believed he was basically beginning anew the earlier Ohio mission, when he enjoyed a relatively harmonious diplomatic relationship with most Delaware leaders. While in Fairfield, Zeisberger learned that the Delaware chief Tedpachxit wanted the missionaries to come preach the gospel to the Indians along the White River in Indiana Territory. He later discovered that a war leader named Pachantschihilas (also Buckongahelas) opposed Tedpachxit's plan to bring any missionaries to live with the Delaware nation. Instead, Buckongahelas had already attempted to bring the Christian Indians to reunite with the other Delawares without their teachers, an offer they had refused. In 1799, Moravian Indians at Goshen invited the Delawares to move east instead. Desiring to reunite the Delaware nation, the Council ignored the request and again invited the Christian Indians to move to the White River. Zeisberger agreed, but assumed the Moravian Indians would need their missionary teachers to accompany them. Perceiving an opportunity to plant a new mission, he secured Bethlehem's approval to send a portion of the Goshen population to the White River. Bethlehem selected its own Abraham Luckenbach, a teacher at Nazareth Hall, and John Peter Kluge, former missionary to Arawak Indians in Dutch Guiana to head the new mission. After studying Delaware during a four-month stay at Goshen, they trekked southwest to Indiana Territory with thirteen Moravian Indians.¹⁵⁸

Nativist movements influenced the way Indians in the Great Lakes region thought about the Gnadenhütten massacre. From about 1786 to 1794 and again from 1805 to 1815, nativist activities surged in response to the loss of land and sovereignty tribes had

¹⁵⁸ Lawrence Henry Gipson, ed., *The Moravian Indian Mission on White River: Diaries and Letters, May 5, 1799 to November 12, 1806* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1938), "Introduction."

experienced by the end of the American Revolution.¹⁵⁹ While different in particulars, all nativist teaching had the assumption that exercising proper behavior could restore the power Indians had lost because of their own spiritual failure.¹⁶⁰ Some of the strongest reaction against white aggression toward Native communities arose among the Shawnees, Wyandots, and Unami Delawares.¹⁶¹ Influential prophets spoke about visions they had experienced and preached messages about the necessity of separating from Euro-American ways, eliminating corrupting practices among Indians, and reviving a Native way of life. The famous Shawnee prophet Tenskwatawa had his first vision in a Shawnee/Delaware community on the banks of the White River in early 1805. Tenskwatawa taught that Indians were “wild,” while whites were “tame.” Indians must free themselves from the “taming” ways of whites through eliminating alcohol from their towns, ceasing to hunt animals for their skins, reducing trade with whites, stopping marriage of Indian women to white men, and, at least for the Shawnees, practicing only monogamy. Similar to other nativist teachers and prophets, he showed the influence of Christian concepts on Native beliefs as he spoke about the need for Indians to turn from their sins so they did not experience the punishment of hell.¹⁶² Strongly influenced by the nativist teaching the Delawares had absorbed from extensive contact with the Shawnees, the war leader Buckongahelas often stood in opposition to Moravian missionary activity. Buckongahelas’ response to Kluge and Luckenbach in 1803 is insightful for thinking about the way most Delawares negotiated their relationship with the Moravians after

¹⁵⁹ Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 95.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 36, 128.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁶² Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 503-06.

1782. Buckongahelas and two other Delaware leaders stopped at the White River mission in September on their way to a large ceremony. After preaching the gospel, the missionaries told them plainly that, “In the beginning [of the White River mission] we believed that you and your people had a desire for the great Word, but now we see, to our sorrow, that no one bothers about it.” Buckongahelas gave them an equally honest response:

Yes, what you say is true. But we cannot drop our customs and teaching and sacrifices, for our forefathers too received them from God and left them to us. Every Indian must remain true to these things and not let them go. Your teaching is only for white people, and you yourselves see that we have another skin. Had God desired that we should have the teaching of the white people, He would have given it to our fathers too. But He did not so desire, and wants us to live as we are living now, and believe nothing else. Then too we have not forgotten the murder of the Christian Indians in Gnadenhütten. The white teachers, your brethren, taught the same thing you are teaching here. They sought to attract the Indians to themselves, and after many had been so drawn to them, they called the white people to come and murder them. That happened, too. I know full well that the teachers were at fault. For this reason the Indians do not want to be made tame again, so that they may not suffer likewise.

Buckongahelas’ response to Kluge and Luckenbach clearly reflects nativist teachings. The Indians must renew Native ways of life that the Great Spirit or Master of Life had originally given them. Religion is also connected to skin color: Indians and whites ought to pursue the distinct ways of life God had shown them. The violence of

Gnadenhütten is connected to both religion and skin color. It was the “white teachers” who “taught the same thing you are teaching here” who were complicit in violence against the Indians. Most important is his comment that “the Indians do not want to be made tame again, so that they may not suffer likewise.” The Delaware war leader shows the nativist influence that accepting white ways – of which Christianity was a part – made them “tame.” That is, white ways made Indians weak. It was because the Indians at Gnadenhütten had been weakened through white teachings that they could not defend themselves.¹⁶³ Kluge insisted that it was a “big lie” that the missionaries ordered the attacks, and Buckongahelas responded with his earlier diplomatic statement that he would not prevent any Indian desiring to come to the Christian Indians from doing so. But his spreading of nativist ideas made Indians who visited the mission town just as resistant to the preaching of the gospel as he: Gnadenhütten happened because white teachers made Indians tame; also, the teaching of the missionaries was only for those with white skin.¹⁶⁴ Like most other Indians in the west, the White River Delawares repeatedly invoked the belief that the Great Spirit had created separate ways for the Indians and the whites.¹⁶⁵ These teachings were more influential than the massacre itself in the decline of missions toward the end of Zeisberger’s life.

It seems clear Zeisberger was so eager to return south of Lake Erie that he considered the invitation to plant a mission along the White River without his usual suspicion of the motives of the chiefs. Wary of the chiefs’ political motives, he had often declined invitations to move the congregation westward into closer proximity to larger populations of non-Christian Indians for fear of weakening the “permeable boundaries”

¹⁶³ Ibid., 507.

¹⁶⁴ Gipson, *Mission on White River*, Kluge to Loskiel, 26 Oct 1803, 508-09; 3 September, 1805, 376-77.

¹⁶⁵ White, *Middle Ground*, 506.

of the mission.¹⁶⁶ In addition to the threats of alcohol and “heathen” influence, influential leaders could pressure the mission Indians to rejoin the tribe. Zeisberger did anticipate the problem of alcohol among the western Indian towns. He successfully petitioned Arthur St. Clair, Governor of the Northwest Territory, to push for Congress to legislate against the trade or offer of alcohol to Moravian Indian settlements.¹⁶⁷ Kluge and Luckenbach’s similar petition to Governor William Henry Harrison of Indiana Territory over two years later proved fruitless, however, and Zeisberger overestimated the Governor’s control over the region.¹⁶⁸ He also seems not to have understood the changes among the Delaware leadership. Although noting in 1797 that Buckongahelas had “always been a great foe to the preaching of the gospel,” certainly remembering a raid the war leader conducted on Gnadenhütten in April 1781 to force the return of the Christian Indians, he underestimated the leader’s nativism and influence.¹⁶⁹ Buckongahelas became the most powerful leader after Captain Pipe increasingly lost influence as chief for his passivity in reuniting the Christian Indians to the main Delaware tribe in 1782 and for his activity in ceding huge amounts of land to the United States.¹⁷⁰ While more isolated at Fairfield from intertribal conflicts south of the Great Lakes, Zeisberger did not realize the extent to which chiefs had lost power to militant warriors who opposed land cessions to whites but still could not quell problems of famine, alcoholism, and violence.¹⁷¹ Because the Goshen mission was inside the boundary of the United States, there were virtually no surrounding Indian communities. After failing to convince the rest of the Delawares to come to them,

¹⁶⁶ Bliss, *Diary*, 1:27-8, 199, 335-44, 409-410, 451-53.

¹⁶⁷ Zeisberger, Mortimer, and Heckewelder to Arthur St. Clair, 28 October 1798, MS., MAB.

¹⁶⁸ Kluge and Luckenbach to William Henry Harrison, 23 February 1801, MS., MAB; Zeisberger and Mortimer to Arthur St. Clair, 9 March 1801, MS., MAB.

¹⁶⁹ Bliss, *Diary*, quotation, 2:501; De Schweinitz, *David Zeisberger*, 483-84.

¹⁷⁰ White, *Middle Ground*, 436-37, 458.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 435, 438-39.

Zeisberger believed relocating part of the mission to form another was the best chance of continuing the mission. "It is certain that through the [earlier] preaching of the gospel ... the Delawares, as a nation, have been powerfully laid hold of," he asserted. Zeisberger interpreted Tedpachxit's invitation as the Delawares' memory of the "last will of their late chief Netawatwees [who died in 1776], whereby he strongly recommended to them to receive the word of God." In a familiar theme, he expressed that, "There are numbers of Delawares in different parts who would willingly embrace the gospel, but find it difficult to detach themselves from their friends and connexions." Instead, "the polite chiefs would perhaps wish the brn. to come and live among them. It is immaterial what may be the motive of proposing to send for us, if Christ only be thereby more extensively preached (Phil. 1:18), and a greater number of souls saved."¹⁷² Zeisberger's eagerness was costly. The diaries and letters of Kluge and Luckenbach reveal that the White River mission faced enormous challenges from the beginning. The greatest challenge came from the resurgence of nativism among the Shawnees and their Delaware neighbors, most powerfully from the prophet Tenskwatawa. Despite consistent effort, the missionaries could not maintain the "permeable boundaries" inherent in the Moravian mission towns. The White River mission turned out to be Zeisberger's greatest mistake.

Nativism exerted pressure on the White River mission from both without and within, presenting a major alternative to the Moravian statutes and rituals. From within, some Indians in the White River mission revealed a loss of confidence in the shamanic power the Moravian missionaries seemed to have. The niece of Buckongahelas, Mary, came to the missionaries for healing from consumption. Her "heathen friends," from the surrounding community came to visit her often. Even though the missionaries frequently

¹⁷² Goshen Diary, 21 July 1799, MS., MAB.

exhorted her to look to the Saviour for healing, she suddenly rejected their help, saying the Word of God could not cure her, but the Indian doctors could. Through Mary's friends, Buckongahelas heard about her and sent a canoe to bring Mary and her husband back, threatening to "drive ... away" the missionaries if they resisted. Some Indians once associated with the missions turned against them with greater violence. Thomas White Eyes, who left the Goshen mission, rejoined non-Christian Indians on the White River and participated in a drunken assault on the Kluge's home in July 1806. From without the presence of powerful prophets kept Indians from joining the mission. In March of 1805 the vision of a prophetess, wherein the Devil threatened to deceive the Indians unless they turned to what the good spirits had told them prompted the chiefs to call for "all Indians" to attend a prolonged ceremony. The next month Indians gathered "in great numbers" to hear story of "the old woman," and perform an eight-day, round-the-clock ceremony. "This teaching makes a great impression on the Indians," the missionaries observed. In May "the Indian woman" preached that Indians should abandon "all evil, drinking, fornication, stealing, murder, and the like," and took over supervision of the Delaware annual Big House ceremony. A former Moravian Delaware woman named Beate claimed to have seen God himself. God sent her a "good spirit" in the form of a "small white thing," which, after swallowing, allowed her to speak only the word of God. By the end of 1805, Tenskwatawa's visions and teachings had spread to a "large number" of Delawares and Shawnees, and, the missionaries lamented, "still [met] with great favor." Tenskwatawa's vision of a crab that held some land in its claws accompanied the Creator's promise that if the Indians obeyed, he would "turn over the land so that the white people are covered and you [Indians] alone shall possess the land." After the

Shawnees renewed their sacrifices, prophets among the Delawares had visions of God who appeared with white hands, “but otherwise ... had the form of an Indian.” Similarly, threats of divine judgment (destruction by a whirlwind) were impending unless the Delawares renewed their sacrifices. The influence of Christianity on these visions and teachings came from years of Indian and white contact. They appealed to the very Indians the Moravians on White River sought to attract. Nativist teachings about reforming sinful behavior and rituals that promised the renewal of Indian power in the face of poverty, social decay, and land loss offered a serious challenge to Moravian offerings of highly structured mission life centered on the powerful blood of the Saviour.¹⁷³

That the Moravian mission to the Indians was operating in a context very different from its earlier days is evident in two different native responses to paintings of the bleeding Christ on the cross. In 1753, Nanticoke and Shawnee warriors visited Bethlehem, where they saw pictures of the crucified Christ on display. They instantly made a connection between the bleeding Christ and the ideal of the warrior captive who dispensed spiritual power through enduring bloody enemy torture.¹⁷⁴ In August 1804, a group of natives visited the mission and asked to see a painting of the Saviour. After they examined the picture of the Saviour nailed to the cross, with blood pouring from his hands, feet, and side wound, they asked Kluge and Luckenbach to paint Moravian teachings on a large skin – “how Heaven and Hell looked, then too all the sins of mankind, and what punishment would follow upon every sin, and how everyone would fare after this life.” If they could see this, they would be “much more deeply impressed

¹⁷³ Gipson, *Mission on White River*, Kluge to Loskiel, 28 April 1805, 530-31; 21 July 1806, 566; 14 March 1805, 339-40; 14 May 1805, 354-55; 25 January 1806, 402-03; 3 December 1805, 392; White, *Middle Ground*, 504, 506-07.

¹⁷⁴ Merritt, *At the Crossroads*, 116-21.

than if they merely heard these things.” An Indian once painted his vision on a skin and many believed from seeing it.¹⁷⁵ Apparently, the image of the Saviour made virtually no impression on them – perhaps because Jesus was portrayed with white skin. Their request for understanding sin and the judgments of the afterlife, however, fit with nativist teachings that Indians would be judged in an afterlife according to how they reformed their living. The Indians on White River had come to demand a demonstration of the power of Christianity in a way that fit into their nativist theology, rather than recognizing a European expression of Christianity as powerful because it was compatible with their traditional beliefs.

Writing to Zeisberger in September 1805, Kluge expressed the missionaries’ frustrations with maintaining the “permeable boundaries” of the mission town. The chiefs “demand now that we should allow everyone who lived with us to do as he pleased.... But this we cannot possibly allow, because we want to live according to the will of God and not according to the will of the heathen.” Some Christian Indians were even participating in “drunken sprees of the savages” and “heathen sacrifices” in the mission village. Despite consistent correction, the situation only grew worse. Zeisberger’s advice to present the chiefs with an annual gift of wampum was useless because wampum was scarce – perhaps an indication of significant changes in traditional Indian diplomacy. Kluge revealed the very different understandings of the White River mission between the Delaware leaders and Zeisberger. Kluge indicated that leaders like Buckongahelas wanted the rest of the Christian Indians to return to the Delaware communities, but wanted no whites to accompany them. “Ever since we have been here, the chiefs have constantly been speaking about it that you sent them so few believing Indians, after they

¹⁷⁵ Gipson, *Mission on White River*, 21 August 1804, 308.

had invited all of you to come.” If Zeisberger sent some brethren from the Fairfield mission, “This would please the chiefs and the other Indians very much, and at the same time remove from their minds the suspicion that we merely desire to attract white people to this country.” It would also give the Christian Indians a buffer from heathen practices, support the missionaries, and give another congregation to which Indian brethren could transfer if conflict arose. While Zeisberger wanted to plant the White River mission because Goshen was so isolated from non-Christian Indians, Kluge felt it was too isolated from Christian Indians. “The [other] Indian congregations are so far away from us,” he lamented. Zeisberger and Bethlehem wanted to expand the spaces of the mission’s “permeable boundaries,” while Kluge and Luckenbach wanted to contract them. Thus, the White River mission revealed different ideas about how the Moravian mission should continue in the nineteenth century. Six months later the situation had grown “very much worse.” Tenskwatawa’s teaching that there were “witches” among the Indians who compromised with whites and tried to kill Indians with a kind of poison led many Delawares to participate in the prophet’s “witch hunts.” Tenskwatawa accused Chief Tedpachxit of having poison that he had used to kill many Indians. In an act of defiance against the missionaries, a group of warriors brought the old chief to the mission town, threw a hatchet into his head, and burned him in front of Kluge and Luckenbach while he was still alive. The only remaining Indian from Goshen, a Mahican named Joshua, was taken prisoner and accused of having a destructive evil spirit. He met the same fate as the chief. Both Indians were considered compromisers with the colonizers. Militant nativists made it clear that white people and Christianity, which for them were inextricably linked, were unwelcome in Indian country. “Wholly worn out,” the missionaries abandoned the

White River mission in September 1806, concluding that the preaching of the gospel among the “heathen Delawares” had little hope of success.¹⁷⁶

The influence of both Christianity and race on nativist theologies makes the Indian rejection of the Moravian missionary program more complex than the paradigm of Christianization allows. Nativist leaders around the turn of the eighteenth century responded to Christianity in many of the same ways they had in the 1730s and 1740s. As Jane Merritt explains, earlier nativists led “not so much a coordinated reaction to the planting of seeds of Christianity ... as ... a response to white Christians who had changed the economic and material conditions of native peoples.”¹⁷⁷ Thus, rather than seeing the Gnadenhütten massacre as “a potent symbol,” of the destructiveness of Christianization, the Indians saw it as a potent example of the continuing duplicity of white people, the violent Other. What Delawares like Buckongahelas objected to most was the presence of the white teachers, who, similar to other white settlers, represented the loss of sovereignty over native land and native ways. This is why Buckongahelas was certain that the white missionaries had called for the attack at Gnadenhütten. Kluge and Luckenbach found that for Indians along the White River, the image of the suffering Jesus had become connected to whiteness. The suffering of the Saviour was no longer a source of power for these Indians, but only an example of the violence of whites; Jesus himself was a victim of white violence. After listening to the missionaries describe the suffering of the Saviour, many would respond, “Those are great words, but we [Indians] have not put him to death. That was perpetrated by white people, therefore, this teaching is for them. We have another skin and consequently another teaching.” As one Indian man said after attending

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., Kluge to Zeisberger, 24 September 1805, 545-51; Kluge to Loskiel, 1 April 1806, 556-65; 17 September 1806, 573-78.

¹⁷⁷ Merritt, “Dreaming of the Savior’s Blood,” 732.

a service, “[Jesus] did not die in Indian land but among the white people.... The white people are more wicked than the Indians.” These Indians had reinterpreted Jesus’ crucifixion as an example of white violence against a white Jesus. Intriguingly, nativist Indians still associated blood itself with power. One man came and “begged” Kluge to bleed him, which he did, since “the Indians here do not like it when one denies them this.” The missionaries likely saw requests for bloodletting as purely medicinal. By contrast, nativist Indians likely requested bloodletting because the act of being cut to release blood gave them spiritual power. But for nativists, Jesus’ blood had come to symbolize only weakness.¹⁷⁸

The loss of Indian land made the messages of nativist prophets appealing. Young warriors, including Delawares, were angry with chiefs like Captain Pipe for ceding large areas of land in what is now eastern and southern Ohio to the United States between 1784 and 1786. Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 with the assumption that because most of the Indians had sided with the British they had to abandon any land that the British surrendered. The only way, the government reasoned, to provide payment to American soldiers, accommodate the growing population, and finance the war debt was to open the land between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to Euro-American settlement. A western Indian confederacy, initiated by the Iroquois Joseph Brant, arose with British aid to confront accommodating chiefs and the expanding Republic. In their own way, nativist leaders also opposed Indian leaders they saw as compromisers and gathered significant support among local Shawnee, Miami, and Delaware populations. Indian opposition led to the resounding military defeat of generals Josiah Harmar in 1790 and Arthur St. Clair a year later. But after the Battle of Fallen Timbers in the summer of 1794, pan-Indian

¹⁷⁸ Gipson, *Mission on White River*, 4–8 July 1806, 437-38.

resistance was broken. The Treaty of Greenville in 1795 ceded land from Cincinnati to Ft. Wayne, Indiana to the United States, forcing the Indians into northwest Ohio. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 rekindled fear and resentment among the western tribes and gave Tenskwatawa and his warrior brother Tecumseh a receptive audience. Between 1804 and 1808, the United States secured large tracts of land in present Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois, and most of the remaining land in Ohio. By the end of the War of 1812 that the militant nativist fight against the United States in the Old Northwest failed.¹⁷⁹

*John Ettwein, the American Civilizing Initiative,
and a Bureaucratic Mission Structure*

Under the leadership of John Ettwein, the Moravian Church in America took advantage of the opening of the west for settlement. After the Revolution, the American Unity of the Brethren lost the protected legal status it enjoyed under the British crown as an “ancient Protestant episcopal church.” Its missions were not protected from control by state governments or denominations unfriendly to the Moravians. The church also continued to face financial difficulties years after the Oeconomy was dissolved to help reduce church debt. Ettwein wanted to ensure stronger financial support for the Indian missions since the Unity still lacked funds for the missionary enterprise. The destruction of the mission towns and poverty of the small congregation that had reassembled soon thereafter made provision for material needs urgent. Yet the cost of transporting items from New York or Philadelphia to Detroit exacerbated the financial burden. Additionally, the Elders’ Conference in Herrnhut was not responsive enough to the needs of the

¹⁷⁹ Reginald Horsman, “The Northwest Ordinance and the Shaping of an Expanding Republic,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 73, no. 1 (Autumn 1989): 24-5; White, *Middle Ground*, 433, 436-37, 510-11, 516-17; Dowd, *Spirited Resistance*, 106, 113-15, 139, 185.

American missions. Ettwein saw an opportunity for support from the government, not through monetary aid – which the indebted country could not provide anyway – but in land. For Ettwein, acquiring land in the Northwest would provide a legally-protected space for the Indian congregations and enable them to return to Ohio country while generating revenue for the missions. Ettwein appealed to Congress for a grant of land on the argument that the United States ought to recompense the church for the massacre at Gnadenhütten. In 1785 Congress granted 12,000 acres encompassing the former sites of Gnadenhütten, Schönbrunn, and Salem. But a return to Ohio was unfeasible until at least 1795 with the signing of the Treaty of Greenville. The fledgling U.S. government lacked the means to control both militant Indians and white settlers who squatted on prohibited lands and attacked native settlements. With the creation of the Constitution in 1787 and subsequent new government, Ettwein had to apply again for the grant. Congress did not officially grant the land until 1796. John Heckewelder surveyed it a year later and Zeisberger finally settled Goshen on the Schönbrunn tract in the fall of 1798.¹⁸⁰

Ettwein believed the best way the church could gain credibility and secure land grants from the United States was to form a “publicly authorized corporation.” He spearheaded efforts to form the Society of the United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen (SPG) in 1787. The SPG took its precedent from the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, which Spangenberg had operated in America until 1762. Under the SPG oversight of the Indian missions was still the responsibility of the Governing Board in Herrnhut, but since members of the Provincial Helpers Conference

¹⁸⁰ Hamilton, “John Ettwein,” 198-201, 203-05; Schutt, “Delawares in Eastern Ohio,” in Beatty-Medina and Rinehart, *Contested Territories*, 116; Horsman, “Northwest Ordinance,” 31; White, *Middle Ground*, 417-20; John Heckewelder, “Sketch of the Report to be Laid Before the President of the United States by the President and Directors of the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen,” *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 4, no. 5 (1895): 311.

served on the SPG's board, the organization's actions gained the support of the Unity by extension. As its first president, Ettwein successfully had the Society incorporated in Pennsylvania in 1788. The state legislature placed the activity of the SPG firmly in line with the civilizing goals of the United States.

... The propagation of the Gospel among the Indians of America is of great importance to the citizens of this and other the United States and may, by the blessing of God, be conducive to the peace and security of the inhabitants and settlers of our frontiers; and by living examples of the missionaries and the converts, the savages may be induced to turn their minds to the Christian religion, industry and social life with the citizens of the United States.¹⁸¹

Ettwein acquired 5,000 acres from the Pennsylvania legislature two years later on which he hoped to build a new Indian mission to the northern tribes. (The Moravian Delawares, however, fearing white settlement, were unwilling to move again to northwestern Pennsylvania).¹⁸² Ettwein embraced the civilizing mission of the United States. When William Linn, a director of the New York Missionary Society, wrote to Ettwein for his advice on beginning a mission to the Indians, Ettwein expressed comfort with the American civilizing mission. "The first concern of the Society," he advised, should be "to find an open Door for their Missionaries. A Place where they can dwell with the good Will of some Indians (perhaps under the Pretence to learn their Tongue) under the Protection of our Heavenly Father and the U. St. where they can plant the Standard of the

¹⁸¹ "An Act to Incorporate the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, formed by Members of the Episcopal Church of the United Brethren or Unitas Fratrum" [27 Feb 1788], Philadelphia. When the U.S. Congress incorporated the SPG in 1810, it used very similar language. See "An Act to Incorporate the Society, for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen Formed by Members of the Episcopal Church of the United Brethren, or Unitas Fratrum," [9 Jan 1810], MS., MAB.

¹⁸² Hessler, "Transatlantic Religion," 180-84, 190-91; Hamilton, "John Ettwein," 200, 202.

cross.”¹⁸³

Under Congress’s grant Indians who agreed to move would have to turn increasingly to agriculture for support. The Society owned the land in perpetuity for the Christian Indians and would provide the churches, schools, ministers, and teachers. Each family could build homes and have a farm, meadow, and provision of firewood. As a corporation, the SPG could generate profit from renting or leasing land that it did not use for the Christian Indians. It could also accept charitable donations. Ettwein proposed 8,000 acres be divided into 150-acre lots for carefully selected members or friends of the Moravian Church to inhabit. The income would fund the Ohio mission in its entirety as well as reimburse the missionaries and the Society for financial losses incurred from the war and post-1782 disruption of the towns. Per the grant, any settlers had to “improve” the land, so when the Society advertised the lots for lease, it promised to build a Gemeinhaus and school and provide an ordained minister for a new congregation.¹⁸⁴

Zeisberger had always hoped to return to the Muskingum after 1782. As he and Heckewelder told one authority in 1784, the Indian congregations had been “taken by force from [our] peaceful habitations on the Muskingum,” and were “impatient to return to our former Country again.”¹⁸⁵ Heckewelder, the agent of the Society, and Mortimer and Zeisberger (who was on the board), introduced their arrival to Governor St. Clair by summarizing the purpose of the Moravian Indian missions: “[T]he grand objects of our mission remain, as heretofore, to preach the gospel to the Indians, establish schools among them, inculcate habits of industry and sobriety, and, instruct them to ‘live a quiet

¹⁸³ Hessler, “Transatlantic Religion,” 193-94; John Ettwein to Dr. William Linn, 3 March 1798, in Hamilton, “John Ettwein,” 372-73.

¹⁸⁴ Hamilton, “John Ettwein,” 205-06; Jesse Blickensderfer, “Establishment of the Moravian Congregations in Ohio,” *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 1, no. 4 (1870): 158.

¹⁸⁵ Zeisberger and Heckewelder to William Wilson, 10 November 1784, MS., MAB.

and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.”¹⁸⁶ But Zeisberger seemed to recognize before they moved that the Indians were hesitant to return to the Muskingum River in Ohio. He wrote Ettwein that, “The Indians could not be persuaded to believe that it would be well for them to return to live among white people or near them; they would have to bear many false accusations and be exposed to all manner of temptations.”¹⁸⁷ In places like New Salem and Fairfield, they were sometimes accused of stealing items from white settlements. Traders had a reputation for tempting any Indians with alcohol. Ettwein responded that the Indians would not be free from these things wherever they lived. He complained to the Governing Board that the Christian Indians had grown “too feeble and old to make a new start.”¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the diaries convey a sense of jubilation at returning to the Muskingum. Expressing naïve optimism, Zeisberger and Mortimer believed the gospel would be “... generally embraced by the Delaware and other nations, and nothing seemed capable of impeding its further progress.” The navigable Muskingum could provide for “vigorous attempts” to spread the gospel to more Indian nations. Perhaps most significantly, the missionaries thought owning land that the government had granted to an incorporated society would bring safety to the mission towns. In case of danger, the brethren could return to settlements that fell under the protection of the United States.¹⁸⁹ The relationship with the government seemed mutually beneficial, then. As the Pennsylvania legislature had expressed, the mission towns provided for the protection of Euro-American settlers through spreading Christianity and civility to the frontier Indians and creating a buffer against aggressive tribes to the west.

¹⁸⁶ Zeisberger, Mortimer, and Heckewelder to Arthur St. Clair, 28 October 1798, MS., MAB.

¹⁸⁷ Quoted in Hamilton, “John Ettwein,” 205, n. 89.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ “Diary of Br. & Sr. Zeisberger and Br. Benj. Mortimer” [4 Oct 1798], MS., MAB.

The Decline of the Goshen Mission

Yet Zeisberger soon realized that Goshen needed a buffer against white settlement. Congress had granted other corporations, most notably the Ohio Company, sizeable amounts of land in Ohio. This company was formed especially to give land – rather than money – to soldiers who had fought in the Revolution. Heckewelder initially hoped the Ohio Company would prove agreeable to Moravian missionary goals. Shortly after Ettwein formed the SPG, Heckewelder met the directors of the Ohio Company and promised he had “the Prosperity of Your Settlement much at Heart.” Likewise, the directors hoped to forge “a reciprocally beneficial intercourse with the Community at Bethlehem.” But by the fall of 1800, the missionaries were happy to hear Heckewelder had sold more land outside Goshen to Moravian settlers. The Ohio Company land to the south was filling up quickly with settlers “indifferent” to the goals of the missionaries. They worried that non-Moravian settlers might force them to relocate the mission, especially since trade in alcohol was frequent. The missionaries hoped the Society would acquire more land as a buffer, especially wooded territory that could provide much needed fuel and hunting grounds necessary for the Indians – perhaps an indication that the Indians did not accept the agrarian lifestyle as much as the government or the SPG wanted. The Society later purchased more than a thousand acres near Goshen “as a rampart against the pushing in of strange [non-Moravian] white people.”¹⁹⁰

Despite an optimistic beginning, it was not long before the missionaries themselves recognized the Goshen mission would face major challenges, especially due

¹⁹⁰ Heckewelder to Ohio Company Directors, 3 December 1788; Ohio Company Directors to Heckewelder, 4 December 1788; Goshen Diary, 19 October 1800, MS., MAB; “Record of the Mission Conference Held in Goshen on the Muskingum from the Tenth to the Twenty-First of October [1803],” trans., Allen Zimmerman (Gnadenhutten, Ohio, 1954), 17, MAB.

to pressures from increasing white settlement. “It is not at all to be wondered at,” wrote Mortimer at the end of 1799, “Considering all circumstances, that our congregation receives but little increase of numbers from among the heathen..., especially in consideration of our geographical location.”¹⁹¹ After Ettwein died, George Henry Loskiel took his place at Bethlehem as director of the North American missions. The mission conference he called at Goshen in 1803 revealed some significant problems. Both the Christian Indians and the missionaries seem to have been keenly aware of the Indians’ minority status in the area. The Indian brethren likely feared that the missionaries might actually have greater loyalty to the surrounding white communities than their own. In regard to contact with whites, Loskiel insisted on contracting the “permeable boundaries” of the mission. Charging the missionaries to renew their personal commitment to the welfare of the Indians, Loskiel told them never to show a preference for spending time with white people more than the Indians, which might allow the Indians to think the missionary “does not really love them.” He also insisted on clearer separation between the Indian congregation and the European congregation at Gnadenhütten. The missionaries could perform temporary ministerial duties at other Moravian towns, but never among non-Moravian whites. “... *Our* [ministerial] objects are, properly, only the Indians.” “Strange white people” were allowed to attend congregational services, but the services must be conducted as if they were not present, and outsiders must never be given communion or baptized. It would compromise the credibility of the missionaries and be “injurious to their chief calling if the Indians ever get the impression ... that they think more of the white people than of the Indians.” Above all, the missionaries must “guard against mixing the Indian congregation and its service in any manner with the white

¹⁹¹ Goshen Diary, 26 December 1799, MS., MAB.

people.” As the mission towns sat on the racialized western frontier that the American Revolution helped to create, Zeisberger and others had to work harder to prove their trustworthiness to the Indians.¹⁹²

Within its first five years, the Goshen mission had not undertaken any “visitation tours” to outside Indian communities. There were multiple reasons for this. There was tension between the congregation and the missionaries. Zeisberger had dismissed the Indian Helpers at Fairfield because he thought they had grown proud of their position in the congregation, and had since not officially restored them, although he continued to use them for ministerial tasks. The 1803 Conference revealed that the choir system had weakened. There had been a decline in the number of services held for the married choir and the children. Zeisberger had had difficulty finishing the Indian hymnbook because he was so busy with other duties. He was also too infirm in his old age to perform much physical labor, and Mortimer apparently lacked help from the Indian brethren in performing tasks like hauling firewood and clearing land for planting. A major concern to Loskiel was the painfully slow progress the missionaries had made learning the native languages. Only Zeisberger had command of any Indian language, a fact the Conference attributed to an overreliance on Indian interpreters. If they had not used interpreters, the missionaries would have been forced to learn the native languages, “or turn away from mission service.” Despite Ettwein’s emphasis on translation, there had not been enough encouragement to learn the languages for regular interaction with the Indians themselves, which of course limited the prospects for the mission’s growth. Other concerns had to do with the mission’s relationship to Bethlehem and the SPG. Communication had been slow to and from Bethlehem, so the mission congregations did not have up-to-date

¹⁹² “Conference Held in Goshen [1803],” 12-13, 18-19, MAB.

synodal minutes informing them of developments in the Gemeinde and Bethlehem was slow to receive the diaries. The SPG furthermore lacked missionaries to send. There is also an indication that the missionaries perhaps felt the Helpers Conference had not given them adequate help during most of Ettwein's tenure: they insisted they were overworked and could not be expected to take more responsibilities than they had. All of these problems kept the missionaries from expanding the "permeable boundaries" of Goshen so it could grow.¹⁹³

Concerning their physical wellbeing, Goshen residents faced a number of significant problems. Economically, they could not produce or trade as frequently as they had done at New Salem or Fairfield. White settlement and the requirement to clear large areas of land for planting led to deforestation and a drastic reduction in wild game. Production and sale of sugar and wood products declined. Additionally, heavy snows killed many of the Indians' pigs in 1804 and 1807, and wolves killed the cattle used to make milk and butter. The Indians had to travel longer distances to find food after drought and insects destroyed crops. When the SPG established a store at Gnadenhütten to give the Indians a place to buy and sell, they could not compete with white traders. Also, the Goshen population was always too small and ill-equipped to cultivate the land on the Schönbrunn tract. The SPG did not provide the Indians with a plow until 1802, so the Indians often had to rely on white neighbors with better technology to help them cultivate their crops. The mortality rate was high: from 1798 to 1807, there were roughly equal numbers of births and deaths. Poor economic conditions and illness led many in the congregation to return to Fairfield. In just over four years, of 26 Indian brethren who had

¹⁹³ Ibid., 6-7, 12-14, 18, 20; Conrad, "'Struck in their Hearts,'" 107-08, 132.

come from Fairfield since Goshen was planted, 16 had returned.¹⁹⁴

A major disruption to the community occurred when the longtime Moravian Indian Ignatius left with his family and twelve other Christian Indians. Ignatius' son Henry committed suicide at Goshen. Following Moravian Church policy at the time, Zeisberger refused to bury his son in God's Acre. Outraged, Ignatius, his wife Christina, and those who sympathized with them left for the recently established mission town at Pettquotting, just south of Lake Erie.¹⁹⁵

Internally, the moral and spiritual condition at Goshen began to wane. Mortimer and Zeisberger observed at the end of 1802 that, "a considerable number" of the Goshen brethren "stand much in need of being anew laid hold of by the Spirit of God."¹⁹⁶ Violation of the statute promising not to allow alcohol in the mission town seemed the biggest threat. The missionaries saw the alcohol trade as "the principal means now resorted to by the grand enemy of souls," the devil.¹⁹⁷ The members of the 1803 conference tried to work out a careful policy regarding the use and abuse of alcohol in the mission towns. Noting that the Christian Indians tended to be very unforgiving with themselves after they got drunk, the missionaries agreed they should always be quick to pardon a truly repentant offender, even if they denied the person participation in the next communion. They did not ban alcohol altogether, but advised the Indians to avoid it given their temptation to drink in excess.¹⁹⁸ Yet problems with alcohol persisted among the Christian Indians. On Good Friday in 1805, half the adult population in Goshen was

¹⁹⁴ Conrad, "'Struck in Their Hearts,'" 112-13; Goshen Diary, 7 June 1807; 30 May 1807; 3 June 1800; 28 December 1802, MS., MAB. I have estimated the birth-to-death rate from the number of infant baptisms and/or births and the number of deaths from most of the diaries of this period.

¹⁹⁵ Goshen Diary, 30-31 March 1805; 8 April 1805; 31 December 1805, MS., MAB; Conrad, "'Struck in Their Hearts,'" 220-21.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 28 December 1802, MS., MAB.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 31 December 1806, MS., MAB.

¹⁹⁸ "Conference Held in Goshen [1803]," 9-10, MAB.

so drunk on whiskey from Gnadenhütten that they could have no lovefeast. One drunken congregant threatened to kill another on Easter.¹⁹⁹ The Indian brethren sometimes purchased alcohol from whites when they left to go hunting or make sugar, and nearby settlers found ways to trade with alcohol.²⁰⁰ In the fall of 1808, Zeisberger's health deteriorated rapidly. Just before he died on November 17, he preached one last sermon to the Indians. To his great disappointment, he had to rebuke them for their behavior. Unless some in the congregation repented, they were on the path to eternal destruction. " ... On the day of judgment," he insisted, "You may not ... [say] that I and your other teachers did not tell you the consequences if you persist in your present course." He expired after the Indians sang hymns in Delaware around his bed.²⁰¹ Try as he might, Zeisberger eventually found it impossible to maintain the "permeable boundaries" of the Goshen mission.

Although the Indians more frequently deviated from the moral order of the statutes in the last years of Zeisberger's life, nativism never had a significant direct effect on the Goshen mission. Many more Indians had left Goshen from economic difficulty and disagreement with Zeisberger's decision over Henry's burial than because of a rejection of teachings about the Saviour or of the missionaries themselves. Their destinations were almost always the Fairfield or Pettquotting mission towns, and many visited or corresponded with Goshen.²⁰² Just three years before the Indians at White River asked to see Moravian teachings on a skin rather than a painting of the wounded Saviour, Indians at Goshen reacted strongly to portrayals of Christ. After seeing paintings

¹⁹⁹ Goshen Diary, 12 April 1805, 15 April 1805, MS., MAB. See also 19 May 1805, 12 March 1806, 3 May 1806, 2 September 1807, MS., MAB.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 30 March 1806, 20 April 1806, 9 December 1806, MS., MAB.

²⁰¹ De Schweinitz, *David Zeisberger*, 668-70, 673-74.

²⁰² Goshen Diary, 31 December 1806, 18 May 1807, 6 July 1807, MS., MAB.

displaying the Saviour's sufferings, members in the congregation reacted with "much emotion." Describing how the Saviour received such wounds on his body, the Indian interpreter "burst into a flood of tears." "One sister said that 'it was no wonder that the brn. and srs. in Bethlehem were better than they, as they not only heard of our Saviour, but saw such pictures of his sufferings.'"²⁰³ This woman perhaps had more in common with the Moravian Indians of the 1750s than the Indians on the White River; she certainly had no problem seeing a white Saviour. Essentially, nativism had the greater effect of keeping the Indians who had rejoined non-Christian Indian communities after the Gnadenhütten massacre from rejoining the missions, rather than pulling away those who had rejoined. With many in the Indian communities to the west angry at land cessions and almost totally alienated from Ohio country, it is no wonder that a mission town on land ceded to the United States and granted to a partnering missionary society was an undesirable place to live. Indeed, although no nativists, the Christian Indians at Goshen had their anxieties about pressure from white communities confirmed. John Henry, the son of Gelelemend, wrote to John Heckewelder in 1820: "We wish to tell you what is causing us dissatisfaction here. It proceeds from the land upon which we live, because already so many whites have settled on the Goshen tract. Yes! On the same land, which, to start with, was given to us and for our use."²⁰⁴ Unequipped to rely on agriculture, lacking the resources and markets for their usual goods, facing intrusion from white neighbors indifferent to the Moravian Indians' welfare, and needing assistance from Congress and the SPG, the Indians' desire to leave and/or turn to alcohol is unsurprising.

²⁰³ Ibid., 6 January 1801, MS., MAB.

²⁰⁴ John Henry to John Heckewelder, 23 September 1820, German, 12:12:175:20, *Records of the Moravian Mission among the Indians of North America*, MAB, quoted in Schutt, "Delawares in Eastern Ohio," in Beatty-Medina and Rinehart, *Contested Territories*.

Eventually, expenses of the mission had far exceeded income from land leases. Four years after Zeisberger's death, the SPG called a meeting to discuss the financial crisis it faced in maintaining the land on the Muskingum, but proposals to save the endeavor failed. In 1822, the SPG universally agreed that pursuing the land grants had been a poor decision, and in April of 1824 the Society retroceded the grant to Congress. (The Society sold the Pennsylvania grants in 1849 for a large sum). The United States promised the handful of Indians still living on the granted land a per capita annuity of \$400 or a new grant of 24,000 acres. With the church unable to maintain even the European Moravian settlement at Gnadenhütten, the government redeveloped the town for other settlers. As for the other missions, residents of Pettquotting eventually gave up their resistance to white traders who offered them alcohol. Drinking and a rejection of Moravian Christianity finally ruined the mission there. American soldiers destroyed Fairfield during the war of 1812. The missionary Christian Frederick Denke, who fled with the Indian residents, returned and rebuilt the mission in a new location. New Fairfield soon had close to 200 residents, although by 1837 white encroachment sent most of the congregation southwest to try to find a home beyond the Mississippi River.²⁰⁵

When John Heckewelder wrote Congress in June 1822, he addressed the question of why the granted land should be returned to Congress. He wanted Congress to compensate the Society for improvements made to the land it had sold, but needed to demonstrate that Moravian efforts to bring the Indians to a more civilized mode of life were actually successful. In an overview of Moravian missions to the North American Indians, Heckewelder argued that the Christian Indians had always shown

²⁰⁵ Heckewelder, "Sketch of the Report," 280-81; J. Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth G. Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum, 1722-1957*, (Bethlehem: Moravian Church in America, 1967), 203, 288-91.

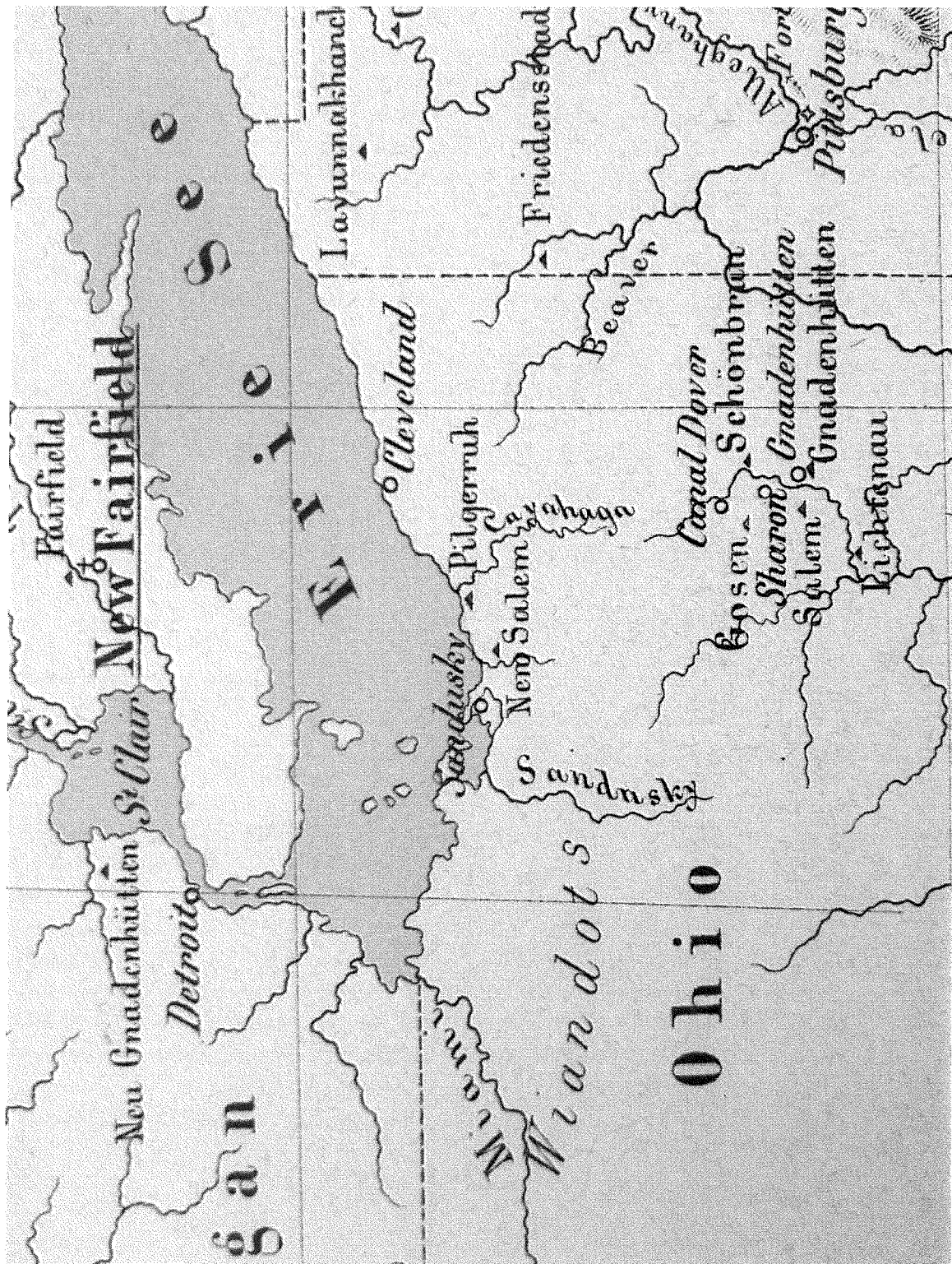
industriousness, “care, cleanliness, order, economy & all the traits which characterize a civilized people. Morality had become habitual to them,” and they exercised the “mental endowments which had previously lain dormant within them.” But the government had failed to restrain the “immoral whites” who constantly tempted the Indians with alcohol and spread lies that the missionaries intended to expel the Indians from their homes and sell their land. The whites refused to hire them or give them fair wages and stole from the Indians. Although the Christian Indians had remained neutral during the American Revolution, preventing more bloodshed, they were the victims of white cruelty. While it was true the Indians at Goshen had fallen into immorality, the Fairfield mission in Canada was still thriving. Heckewelder blamed Congress for failing to make and enforce laws that would treat whites and Indians equally, for leading the SPG into a deal it had no way of maintaining, and for denying the Indians certain material benefits it had promised. By contrast, he argued, the SPG had always promoted the welfare of the Indians, expending large sums of money to compensate for Congress’s neglect. What Heckewelder failed to see, however, was that several decades of Moravian cooperation with Congress’s civilizing program had made all of this possible. Ultimately, the outcome of this misguided policy was the decline of the missions in which Zeisberger had worked so assiduously. Whatever the cost to the Society for Propagating the Gospel, the Christian Indians paid the greatest price.²⁰⁶

David Zeisberger maintained the Moravian religious life in the Indian mission towns after the Gnadenhütten massacre. Although the populations of the post-1782 towns never regained their earlier numbers, many Indians continued to find the highly structured communal life centered on a theology of the suffering Saviour appealing.

²⁰⁶ Heckewelder, “Sketch of the Report,” 283-314; quotation, 291.

Moravian Indians continued to appropriate elements of Moravian religious ritual, such as communion, baptism, the lovefeast, and hymn singing in their culturally unique ways, continuing to develop – in Jane Merritt’s phrase – “a distinctive native Christian religion.” Maintaining the inherent “permeable boundaries” of the mission towns, which allowed non-Christian Indians to enter and Christian Indians to leave – while demarcating both groups with the “statutes,” proved an increasingly hopeless task. One major challenge to the “permeable boundaries” came from nativism, which prevented the expansion of the mission towns to the White River and kept many Delawares from returning to the towns. Another challenge came from the Society for Propagating the Gospel’s decision to replant the Ohio missions on land granted by Congress. This move subsumed the Moravian Indian mission under the civilizing initiative of the United States and essentially ended the mission in the Old Northwest. Though Zeisberger provided stability to the missions, he realized before his death that his influence could not overcome these challenges. Indeed, both the Christian Indians and the missionaries with whom they lived found an inhospitable land in the western region of the early Republic.

Appendix: Map of Moravian mission centers around the Great Lakes
(showing New Gnadenhütten, New Salem, and Goshen)



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